

A ROBUST VOCABULARY APPROACH
WITH A MUSIC COMPONENT

by

Juan Rigoberto Figueroa García

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Committee:

Mary Diaz, Primary Advisor
Ann Mabbott, Secondary Advisor
Chris Perry, Peer Reviewer

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Effective vocabulary instruction in a two-way immersion school is a fundamental ingredient to help children develop full bilingualism. Isabel Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan propose a robust instruction that directly explains the meaning of words and that uses questions and exercises to encourage children to acquire deep vocabulary knowledge. On the other hand, music has the power of motivating children to learn words in a fun way and of making vocabulary connections with rhythm, pitch and playful song stories that might enhance their lexicon. This study explores how effectively Beck et al.'s approach to teaching vocabulary can be applied to teaching Spanish vocabulary, when combined with a music component, in the daily context of a kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school. The study was conducted in a kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school during the summer academic program with six students of a group of twenty children. Students were exposed to a robust vocabulary instruction with a music component for two weeks. Students took weekly oral assessments before, during, and after instruction in each week and a final comprehension and vocabulary knowledge assessment at the end of the study. The results of these assessments showed that students made significant progress in those two weeks, but their scores did not reach the expectations set for the learning process. The findings suggested that students needed more time to learn the vocabulary and that the summer academic setting was not appropriate for this type of study.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My interest in using the approach by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) to teach vocabulary with a music component to help children acquire Spanish vocabulary in their first or second language has motivated me to initiate a study about this topic through my capstone. I have been using music in different learning environments since I started working with children, but I had not heard about the instructional vocabulary approach of Beck et al. My most recent experience with direct vocabulary instruction was limited. I knew about some instructional methods, but I was still using traditional theories that recommended providing students with a list of words and encouraging them to memorize them. I used to believe that a dictionary was an important tool for children to enhance their vocabulary. However, when I started reading the book *Bringing Words to Life* by Beck et al. my perspective about teaching vocabulary changed completely. I need to confess that I felt a little bit embarrassed when I read the first chapter of the book and found a list of conventional wisdom that I had supported for many years. Beck et al. suggested that there were several deficiencies in this type of instruction and demonstrated these with clear examples. I became more curious about the research that Isabel Beck has done around vocabulary acquisition and I decided to make it part of my research project.

At this point, I did not know the research behind applying this overlapping technique that combines Beck et al.'s English vocabulary method and music in the Spanish language classroom. I wondered what the experience had been for other

language teachers using specific vocabulary instruction with music. I wanted to learn more about Isabel Beck et al.'s proposal for vocabulary instruction: her theory and practice. I wanted to know what the theories are that support or oppose using songs as a way of enhancing young children's Spanish vocabulary. I especially wanted to know whether the approach by Beck et al. to teaching English vocabulary can be applied effectively to teaching Spanish vocabulary to children, when combined with a music component, in my daily context of a kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school.

Playing my guitar while I sing with my kindergarten students, in order to enhance their Spanish vocabulary, is one of the most popular activities that I do with them. I am particularly interested in using songs in the classroom as an effective teaching strategy to help children's concentration to acquire Spanish. In addition to direct instruction, it is important for teachers to have other strategies that engage children's attention to learn new vocabulary.

I have found in children's songs a useful way to gain their attention particularly during circle meetings and transitional times. According to Sobe (2010) "The problem of how best to capture, direct, and enhance children's abilities to pay attention has been a central feature of educational thought and practices over a long duration (p. 149)." Since the Enlightenment scholars such as Rousseau, Locke, and Edgeworth have been concerned about developing children's attention during instruction. But this subject is becoming more the focus of extensive studies and projects than solely an instructional aide as it was in the past (2010). A research team from Stanford University School of

Medicine has shown that music in fact, "...engages the area of the brain involved with paying attention (Baker 2007, p. 1)." Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to capture the image of participants' brains, the researchers have their subjects listen to a piece of music without asking them to pay close attention to it.

As soon as the rhythm of the music changed the movement the participants' attention increased (2007). Children's songs have both the music that captures their attention and also have the lyrics, which are rich sources of vocabulary.

My intention has been to implement an effective vocabulary approach with traditional children's songs from Latin America. Although I have always found this activity to be fun, I also understood the importance of not only finding a serious approach for vocabulary instruction, but also the necessity for a linguistic criteria to select songs as well as methods to use songs as a vehicle to deliver this vocabulary instruction. I have been using isolated traditional strategies for many years to teach vocabulary, such as using definitions from dictionaries, encouraging students to figure out the meaning of words in context, and having children memorize words through vocabulary drills among others. I observed that children's interest to learn deteriorates when they are exposed to constant repetition of the same material in the same way. Consequently, the results were not always successful. I have observed that with pure traditional methods alone children almost always memorize and obtain only a shallow knowledge of the words. In these circumstances their attention span and participation decreases during instruction.

On the other hand, I have been incorporating songs in my daily language instruction, but without clear criteria to teach and select songs and Spanish vocabulary. I

have been singing with my students to motivate them to use the target language and improve their pronunciation, but without having comprehensible objectives in each song. In spite of lacking those important elements to plan my singing lessons, my students have learned to some degree pronunciation, vocabulary, and Hispanic culture. On some occasions I heard children identifying vocabulary from the songs in different contexts during the school day; for example, while reading a book, working in small groups, or just having a lesson discussion. I have found in music that special multi-dimensional way to teach vocabulary that direct academic instruction does not offer. In addition, I knew also that songs could be a powerful and an effective tool to create a friendly environment where everybody felt safe to make mistakes and integrate socially into the group.

Guiding Question

Last year my teaching experience made me think about combining effective vocabulary instruction with a music component. First, I was interested in finding a reliable instructional approach to teach vocabulary. And second, I wanted to know about linguistic criteria to select songs to teach vocabulary and how to use these songs in a language classroom. I also was curious about why music was such a powerful motivator to make children learn new words. I wanted to understand on a deeper level how songs affected children in their language acquisition.

Looking for effective vocabulary instruction, I came upon the name of Isabel Beck, an emeritus professor and senior scientist in the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. According to Lomando (2008) Beck has been involved in extensive research on English vocabulary and she has written more than 100 articles and several books. In

the book that she co-authored, along with McKeown, and Kucan, I found an intriguing proposal to teach English vocabulary. My research question is: How effectively can Beck et al.'s approach to teaching vocabulary be applied to teaching Spanish vocabulary, when combined with a music component, in my daily context of kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school?

In this study I intend to answer this question by exploring the theories of various musicologists, language, and linguistic experts as well as professionals in brain research. Their findings in their fields and collecting data in one of the kindergarten classrooms for the academic summer program are the approaches to answer this question.

Discovering the Use of Music

My Introduction to Music

My interest in music started when I was about five years old. I still remember when I went to visit my grandmother at her farm in the Andes Mountains back in my country Colombia and my uncle Robústulo improvised a stage using a kitchen table as my platform for singing. One or two candles were the only light that we had on “my stage” because there was no electricity in rural areas at that time. My family was my audience. My grandma, my mother, my father, and my sisters sat around the table clapping and laughing. My uncle was also there offering me one coin for each song that I would sing. Although I liked that reward, for me singing and having fun with my family was more important than anything else.

My early childhood experiences with music laid the groundwork for a deep interest in folk music and the guitar. I learned to appreciate the most authentic traditional

Colombian music. On the weekends, friends of my family would come over to our house with guitars and perform for us both modern and traditional tunes. Once in a while one of our friends would let me play one of those guitars so that I would have a little sense of how it felt to hold such a beautiful instrument. Unfortunately, my family did not have any extra money to buy me a guitar, I saw the guitar as one of the most precious possessions that a child could ever have.

When I was thirteen or so, my father made a financial sacrifice and bought me a cheap guitar. His love for music made him appreciate my passion for singing and playing a string instrument. On that guitar I started making my first musical notes that I learned from our musician friends. Since I could not attend a music academy, I used guitar manuals to teach myself songs, chords, and different rhythms.

Using Music to Learn

After I graduated from high school, I had the opportunity to work as a social work advocate for low-income families in a government institute that focused on the well-being of family and children. My responsibilities in this job were to promote educational activities for at-risk children and provide lessons about good health habits and nutrition. At that time I did not know that I was entering the door to what was going to be the area of my future career, education. I was already excited about teaching and finding effective methodologies to reach all of the children in the program. While I was working in that institution, I heard for the first time about using music for both recreational and educational purposes. In one of my trainings for this job, the instructor talked about teaching through songs and movement. To this day, I have used this

technique with my students. Songs became an important method for me as I taught basic skills such as washing hands or brushing teeth. I discovered that songs were even useful to teach basic math concepts to children.

My successful work with low-income parents and children resulted in my promotion to a position as an elementary school teacher in a rural, indigenous reservation in a far away region of my country called "*Llanos Orientales*." I traveled for fourteen hours through dry and dusty savannas in the back of a truck with my guitar and some school materials.

A few weeks into living on the reservation, I learned that the indigenous people often used music in their traditional ceremonies and in their daily routines. Children participated in ceremonies where they sang and danced following the rhythm of the shaman or priest who played a single *maraca* in a ritualistic manner. On this reservation, the shaman was an old man with a gentle sense of humor and a great disposition for working with young people. Once a month he would come to visit me in my school and perform a traditional dance with my students. Although the children were bilingual in Spanish and Sikuni (the language spoken by Guahibo people) everybody sang in Sikuni. I learned that music for this community was not only simple playful expression, but also a source of their ancient oral tradition that had been carried on for many years by their parents and other ancestors. Music in many ways helped Guahibo's children to preserve their identity, which was under threat from the dominant culture.

Music to Teach Second Language

When I first came to the United States to work for a high school as a Spanish teaching assistant, I constantly used my guitar to teach traditional Spanish songs to the students. The most common vocabulary technique that I used along with songs was the cloze procedure in order to enhance students' Spanish vocabulary. According to Perego and Boyle (2005), a cloze procedure intends to help students to use target vocabulary in context by having them fill in the blanks from a passage with the right word using clues from the context. For example, I used to type the lyrics of a particular song leaving out words from the text. Students would try to identify and insert the words they heard while listening to me singing. I chose songs that connected to themes we were studying. I occasionally would introduce a song because it referred to a historical event or a social problem, using the lyrics of the song to initiate a discussion about the particular issue. At the end of the lesson, everybody tried to sing the song with me as a way to practice for fluency. Every week I tried to work with all five teachers in the language department. As a result, I had the chance to get to know teaching styles of other teachers as well as their students.

Unfortunately, not everyone saw the use of songs and guitar in a foreign language classroom as an effective teaching strategy. I found out that some teachers believed that only direct instruction would fulfill the needs of students to learn vocabulary. My songs and my guitar were, for them, a "nice" entertainment for Fridays after a long week of academic work. However, I saw students' positive response to my songs and this led me to believe that the use of songs in the classroom had an important effect on learning. At

that point, I did not know the research behind teaching songs in a language class as a vocabulary strategy, but I saw this technique work for many students.

During the summers, I had the opportunity to work for Concordia Language Villages as a Spanish teacher and as a song leader, playing my guitar and teaching songs in Spanish to 140 language students, called villagers. There I met people from all over the world, most of them like me, coming to work without having a clear idea about the program. We had read the brochures about Concordia, but living in a camp where we were part of the whole language immersion concept was a different experience. The intensity of the work was sometimes quite challenging and overwhelming, but it was fun: there was music, songs, dance, great food, new friends, and most of the time, a sincere interest and respect for learning from each other.

In an immersion program such as Concordia Language Villages, music played an important role in the daily activities programmed for the villagers. I used to play my guitar daily in different activities, such as the flag rising ceremony every morning, singing a thank-you song before meals, and singing time in the afternoon with everybody in the camp. I played my guitar so often that in a few days I got blisters on my fingertips. But songs once again showed me their power as a vehicle to integrate people and transmit culture in the world community.

In the camp, songs were taught using the repetition method to help villagers to memorize the lyrics. Neither print copies of the lyrics nor translations in English of the words of the song were ever used. Instead, the children would learn the songs by memorizing the lyrics through a process of repeating the words in short sentences. This

teaching method reinforced vocabulary comprehension by encouraging children to represent the meanings of words using body gestures. For example, for the word house or home *casa* students would put their hands above their heads and would touch their fingertips forming shape of a roof. The teaching method implemented by Concordia Language Villages coordinators discouraged instructors from using printed material while teaching songs. According to their theory, written words would prevent children from learning songs by heart. If children memorized without seeing the lyrics, they would develop a more native-like pronunciation in the target language. At any rate, the teaching system was effective for many beginning learners who were able to learn the songs in a few days and produce a fairly clear pronunciation for a native speaker audience.

From Personal Experience to Research

All these remarkable experiences in which singing songs has played an important role in my life have made me a passionate advocate for the implementation of this art form in the language classroom. In the same way that I was touched by music and songs for the first time when I was five, I would like my five-year-old students to experience the same joy and inspiration that I experienced. I am confident that providing children with the appropriate environment to use music and songs will not only benefit their learning but will also deepen their appreciation for themselves, other people, and cultures.

My interest in using different types of songs in a kindergarten classroom is not only supported by my own teaching and learning experiences, but also by researchers who have studied aspects of this strategy from different angles. Conclusions from the

International Reading Association Convention on May 5, 2003 suggest that music molds children's "mental, emotional, social, and physical development" (Routier 2003, p. 8). In addition, members of the same convention agree that music improves children's ability to remember and memorize (Routier 2003). Sprenger (1999) says that music is one of the most powerful ways for improving automatic memory. According to her, there are five pathways for memories: semantic, episodic, procedural, automatic, and emotional memory. She points out that these pathways can be stored as long-term memories. In her study, Sprenger makes clear that the automatic memory pathway is active in the cerebellum. She states that the cerebellum can encode information that is recited for naming letters, multiplication facts, and decoding words. The author explains that any information that the students have learned automatically may also be stored in the cerebellum, including songs that they have learned in the past. Sprenger suggests that the automatic memory may lead learners to other types of memories. She explains that if people suddenly heard a song that they had not heard in a long time, they might start singing it. Meanwhile, they begin to remember the events that happened when they sang that particular song the last time. Music, in this case, also promotes mental connections between words and events that help people to remember a key word or an event. Whether that event was sad or happy might trigger an emotional effect in people. That is how the listeners move from the automatic memory to the emotional memory. According to Brackett and Katulak (2006), emotional skills are associated with success in many areas including student learning and academic performance. Emotions, lead to attention, which influences learning, memory, and behavior. If music can promote emotional memory,

music becomes a vehicle to strengthen students' emotional skills. Researchers agree that students who are able to control their emotions have the advantage of staying focused in class (2006).

At a professional level, this study suggests children's songs as a way to stimulate perception of emotions and in that way capture students' attention. At the same time, this study explores songs as a source of rich and authentic language to apply Isabel Beck's approach to teaching Spanish vocabulary in children in a kindergarten classroom at a dual immersion school. This study is important to me because I believe that by having a clear understanding of this strategy, I can be a more effective language teacher. In addition, this research project could be a contribution to education that would directly impact children's language growth. Spanish dual immersion schools in Minnesota are relatively new, and I believe that investigating and studying in depth the effectiveness of certain teaching strategies in this kind of setting would help these programs to become more efficient in promoting bilingualism.

Dual Immersion Language Programs

The setting where I teach is a dual immersion model that started only three years ago. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), A dual immersion or two-way-bilingual immersion programs is a teaching model that joins together in the same classroom a fairly equal number of native English language speakers and native speakers of another language. Students in this setting receive academic instruction in both languages, English and the partner language.

Sugarman and Howard (2001) explain that TWI has to make decisions about selecting a program model. This selection is based on student population, the language capability of the teachers and support staff, the interest and concern of parents, and the political climate in the community. The student population influences what language other than English is going to be used. CAL defines the two most common modalities of dual immersion programs as 90/10 and 50/50. In a 90/10 model, 90% of the instruction during the first two years is in the partner language and only 10% is in English. Instruction in English will increase gradually in subsequent years while the minority language will decrease. CAL clarifies that in the 50/50 model 50% of the instruction is in the partner language and 50% is in English and this distribution is maintained through all the grades.

My Teaching Context

I work as a kindergarten teacher at a Spanish dual immersion school, which employs a 90/10 model. The school is located in a suburban area in the Midwest. I teach my group of students every day in Spanish for 90% of the school day, and they receive instruction in English for 10% of the school day. I intended to do my research in a kindergarten classroom during the summer academic program and I assumed two roles in the process: observer and participant. This research is directly connected to TWI because through it I developed a vocabulary strategy that permits language teachers to enhance vocabulary in both groups (L1 and L2). However, any effective vocabulary strategy that results from this research may be used in other educational settings with similar results.

In Chapter One I presented the topic for my research by explaining my personal story and reflections on teaching vocabulary through both direct instruction and using different types of songs. I also mentioned my interest in Isabel Beck's approach to teach vocabulary and my idea of using her model as a method with a music component. Next, I presented a summary of my experiences using music for educational and cultural purposes. I cited briefly some research that has studied music and songs to support the importance of this subject in my professional career, specifically to the connection of this subject with children's vocabulary development. In Chapter Two I will review different categories of literature as they relate to the specific concepts addressed in the research question. Chapter Three discusses why I chose to collect the data in the way I did. In Chapter Four, I present the results of the data collected from my students. Chapter Five contains conclusions and problems that I encountered doing this study. In addition, I comment on how I grew intellectually from working on this study. Finally, I make suggestions for future investigations and recommendations for administrators, teachers, and parents.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The research question for this study is: How effectively can Beck et al.'s approach to teaching vocabulary be applied to teaching Spanish vocabulary, when combined with a

music component, in my daily context of kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school? The first category for the literature review is connected to the concept of bilingual education and dual immersion education. I will briefly mention the concept of bilingual education and the history of dual immersion programs in the United States, as well as the advantages of this type of programs according to a group of experts in bilingual education. In the second category, I will mention the most relevant theories about second language acquisition focusing on the affective filter, input hypothesis, and linguistic environment. These topics are directly pertinent to the use of songs as a strategy to teach vocabulary. The third category establishes evolutionary correlations between music and language and different perspectives about the effect of music in people's minds and brains. The same category includes the theory of musical intelligence in young children and the use of music in the language classroom. The fourth category takes a closer look at the approach by Isabel Beck et al. to teach vocabulary, taking as a reference the book *Bringing words to life: robust vocabulary instruction* by Isabel Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan. Finally, I will refer to a combination of criteria that different authors suggest to select songs in the language classroom and methodologies to use these songs for vocabulary instruction.

Bilingual Education and Two-Way Immersion (TWI)

The setting of this study was a bilingual program that adopted a two-way immersion model. Researchers have found that the definition of bilingual education goes beyond the simple concept of using two languages in a school. They state, "Bilingual education is just a simple label for a complex phenomenon" (Baker and Prys Jones, 1998,

p. 467 and Cazden and Snow as cited in Zelasko, 2003, p. 175). For example, Romaine (2006) maintains that “bilingual education can mean different things in different contexts” (p. 591) depending on different variables such as language of instruction, language spoken by students, and linguistic goals of the program or models. The author makes a distinction between program types and models. According to Romaine (2006), models are more associated with their objectives in relation to language, culture, and society and while programs types are more connected to administrative matters such as student body, instructors, and program organization (2006).

There are several bilingual models. In order to identify a specific model, it is necessary to find out what the students’ first language (L1) is, the language that is used to teach, and what the purpose of the program is, in terms of students’ language proficiency (Zelasko, 2003).

Furthermore, Baker and Prys Jones (1998) point out some fundamental characteristics that are part of the framework of bilingual education in the world and that may help readers to understand the complexity of this issue. For example, schools which merely include bilingual students are different from schools that implement bilingualism. Similarly, a school that teaches a second language is different from a school that teaches academic content through a second language. Another characteristic that researchers find is the different purposes that exist between public and private schools implementing bilingual education. The authors clarify that governments promote bilingual education with the idea of cultivating the official language or the languages more spoken in the country. In contrast, elite societies have been promoting bilingual education through

private schools or specialty schools to provide their own children with language skills that will improve their future lives both academically and economically.

Moreover, according to Baker and Prys Jones (1998), the difference between *weak* and *strong* (p. 466) forms of bilingual education presents one more characteristic that researchers suggest, may help people to identify a bilingual model. According to the authors, the weak form uses the children's native language to move minority language speakers to a state of acculturation in the mainstream using children's native language, but at the expense of losing that first language. Whereas the strong form, the authors say, looks for not only maintaining children's native language, but also for acquiring the dominant language and developing multicultural learners (p. 466). Finally, these researchers conclude that "bilingual education is an umbrella term" (p. 468) that contains forms of education that use more than two languages and includes also the strong and the weak forms of bilingualism (Baker et al. 1998).

Among the vast terminology around bilingual education some research (e.g. Romain, 2006) uses the word *immersion* in certain aspects of this educational model. Immersion is a way of teaching a foreign language by using it as a vehicle for subject matter instruction (Met, 1993). Immersion could be total or partial depending on how much the foreign language is used during the school day (1993). According to Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000) two-way immersion (TWI) is a combination of the bilingual programs and immersion methods. Different authors use a variety of names for Two-Way Immersion. I will use this term.

What is a Two-Way Immersion (TWI)?

Howard, Surgarman, Perdomo, & Adger (2005) explain that TWI is a form of education that mixes two groups of students in equal numbers. These students are native speakers of one of the other two languages used for academic instruction. The authors suggest that in the United States these two groups consist of English native speakers and native speakers of other languages, usually Spanish. The authors conclude that this group arrangement is meant to facilitate students' acquisition of both languages, as students themselves model and learn from one another. In terms of language division, there are two models that researchers (e.g., Garcia and Jensen, 2006) identify as 50:50 and 90:10. The numbers indicate the percentage of instructional time during the day in both English and in the target language (2006). In the 90:10 model for example, 90 represents the percentage of instructional time in the target language during the day and ten denotes the percentage of instruction delivered in English the rest of that day (2006).

History of TWI

The year when TWI started is difficult to determine as there are various ideas about its origins. For example, Kathryn J. Lindholm-Leary in her book *Dual Language Education* stated that TWI came from four programs created in different parts of the United States about 20 or 30 years ago. The research report "Trends In Two-Way Immersion Education" by Elizabeth R. Howard, Julie Sugarman, and Donna Christian from Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) an agency that has long history of following trends in bilingual education, the authors assert that the TWI began approximately 40

years ago. At any rate, many authors agree that the interest in TWI has increased in the last couple decades. For example Garcia et al. (2006) explain,

After the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1994, a large federal effort related to the education of dual language students was launched. It was at this point that the US Department of Education promoted the development of educational programs whose goal was dual language competency for both language minority students speaking a non-English home language as well as for students whose home language was solely English. (p. 2)

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL, 2010) demonstrates in a comprehensive chart the effect of this effort from the government to promote TWI. Here CAL has recorded new and existing programs in the United States from 1962 to 2008. Based on this chart, since 1994 to 2008 an average of 14 programs per year have been created in this country with 346 programs recorded in 2008 (<http://www.cal.org/twi/directory/growthtable.htm>). Unfortunately, the rapid growth of TWI programs and the failure of some of them to register with CAL have created a challenge for this institution to document every single new program that emerges and have more precise data (Freeman, Y., Freeman, D., and Mercuri, 2005).

Advantages of Two-Way Immersion Programs

The advantages of TWI explain its increasing popularity in the United States in the last few decades. According to Montague, Marroquin, and Lucido (2002), this

educational model promotes not only bilingualism, but also biliteracy in both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers. In addition, the authors agree that TWI creates a positive educational environment to develop high or average academic competence, cross-cultural awareness, and sense of personal worth (p. 3). Lindholm-Leary (2001) corroborates the effectiveness of TWI described by the authors above and affirms that any of these models benefit equally both groups of speakers. Furthermore, Zelasco, (2003) emphasizes that, in general bilingual education has important advantages for all speakers, thus allowing students to “master academic content material...[and] become proficient in two languages- an increasingly valuable skill in the early twenty-first century” (p. 180).

One more advantage of TWI is related to its sociocultural aspect. Olivas, (2006) states that combining a minority language with English in the same classroom and providing “equal status” to both languages facilitates the additive bilingualism framework (p. 49). In other words, the process of learning a second language in TWI is not going to put at risk the normal development of young students’ native language and their culture (Cummins, 2000). Cummins also asserts that young students who are instructed in their first language have more opportunities to learn content knowledge and experience success right from the beginning of their schooling. Researchers (e.g. Cummins, 2000 and Zelasko, 2003) have confirmed that these young students are able to transfer academic knowledge once they acquire English as their second language.

According to Snow and Freedson-Gonzales (2003) it has been proven that literacy skills such as “phonological awareness, print concepts, decoding skills, and extending

discourse, are transferable from an L1 [first language] to an L2 [second language]” (p. 182). General conclusions from Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000) indicate that teachers can expect children to transfer from L1 to L2 different aspects including “sensory-motor skills, comprehension strategies, study skills, and habits and attitudes” (p. 90). Other researchers (e.g., Carlson, Carson, Carrel, Silberstein, Kroll, and, Kuehn 1990) conclude that similarities between L1 and L2 facilitate positive transfer for second language learners. Furthermore these authors also predict positive transfer in a more general form from English learners who are native speakers of ideographic languages, such as Japanese or Chinese where characters represent ideas or concepts instead of pronunciation (1990).

Aspects of Second Language Acquisition

That Validate the Use of Songs to Learn Vocabulary

The second category of the literature review of this document is associated with second language acquisition. In this case the focus is on input hypothesis, the affective filter, and motivation. These theories are directly related to this study because they analyze important conditions to learn a second language. The use of songs as a strategy to teach vocabulary is connected to these theories.

Stephen Krashen proposes five hypotheses to explain how people acquire a second language (L2): Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, Monitor Hypothesis, Natural Order Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis, the Simple Output Hypothesis (SO), and Affective Hypothesis (Saville-Troike, 2006). For the purpose of this section of the chapter the attention is concentrated in only three of Krashen’s claims, Input Hypothesis, The Simple

Output Hypothesis, and Affective Hypothesis. Even though researchers have criticized Krashen for creating theory without a research base, his model has impacted language instruction in the last two decades (2006). From the beginning, Krashen supported the movement of experts who, in the 1970s, confronted the behaviorist theory of Second language acquisition. Behaviorists affirmed that in order to acquire a suitable second language skill, it was necessary to learn it through “repetition and reinforcement” (Mackey 2006, in Fason and Connor-Linton [Eds.] p. 434). Krashen’s opposing theory suggests that language learners need input (heard or read) that is a little bit above the learner’s level of comprehension, but able to be understood a specific context. Krashen identifies this as comprehensible input ($i+1$), where i represents the student’s actual second language level and $+1$ stands for the input slightly beyond comprehension (2006). He indicates that comprehensible input ($i+1$) is the level that the learners have not acquired yet, but are ready to learn (Krashen 1991, in Alatis J. E. [Eds.]). Krashen states that only those methods that provide learners with comprehensible input are effective.

Similarly, the author states that through the output hypothesis, learners are able to acquire second language skills by just “producing language speaking or writing” (p. 409). In this case, learners’ output does not need correction, comments, or interaction in order to improve the learners’ language abilities (1991). In the affective filter hypothesis, Krashen’s re-states the concept of comprehensible input ($i+1$) and makes clear that this sole aspect is not enough for language acquisition. The author explains that learners need to have “the low affective filter” (409). The concept of affective filter explains why “everyone is not successful in learning a second language” (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p.

201). Krashen suggests that emotional barriers such as “motivation, attitude, self-confidence, and anxiety” (p. 201) create a filter between the input and “the language acquisition device”(p. 201). The author explains that the language acquisition device is that part of the brain where language acquisition takes place. If the filter is high, the input cannot reach the language acquisition device. On the contrary, if the filter is low, the input reaches the language acquisition device, especially when the input is “comprehensible” (p. 202). In the following chapter, the relationship of these hypothesis to music will be discussed.

Connection between Music and Language

The third category of this literature review sets up the parallel between the historical development of music and language. Next this section reviews the literature about the effect of music on people’s minds. The same category embraces the theory of musical intelligence and the application of vocal music in the elementary language classroom. These topics support the idea of using music in a language classroom because of the commonalities that both areas seem to share in their historical development.

Mithen (2006) argues that academics have studied different universal attributes of the human mind, but they have not included music in their studies. According to him, this omission gives people an incomplete idea about the meaning of being human. Mithen insists that the study of music should be parallel to the study of language. He believes that this is the only way to make progress in understanding the origin of language. But not all the academics have avoided exploring other venues. Mithen highlights the names of well-known researchers such as Charles Darwin, John Blacking, Jaques Rousseau, and

Otto Jespersen among others, who included the evolution of music and its inherent relationship with humans. In spite of their important insights into the direct correlation between the origins of music and language, these authors' contributions have not been considered appropriately (2006). Mithen supposes that this omission is due to the difficulty of addressing language in contrast to music. On one hand, language and its function of transmission of information can be easily accepted as a product of evolution. On the other hand, music is about "expressing and inducing emotion" (p. 2), which is more challenging to examine under an evolutionary perspective. Perhaps for that reason archaeologists have been more interested in studying the intellectual abilities of our ancestors than their emotional lives (2006). But Mithens admits that there are exceptions.

In his study, Mithen cites the work of Dean Falk, senior scholar from Department of Anthropology at Florida State University. Based on Mithens' research, Falk proposes a theory to explain the origin of lullabies in early humans before language appeared (2006). According to her, after Neanderthals lost their long body hair, mothers were forced to leave their babies on the ground while they collected food or engaged in courtship behavior. Falk believes that this separation created stress on the babies who used their crying to re-establish physical contact with their mothers (p. 203). She speculates that babies' stress affected early human mothers in the same way that modern humans are affected by their babies' stress now. Falk thinks that those Early Human mothers, who had the ability to create pre-linguistic vocal sounds with melody and rhythm to calm their babies down, were highly selected by males. In addition, Falk suggests that early human

mothers' emotional behavior, that moved them to comfort their babies through early lullabies, might have been copied by other mothers (2006).

However, Pinker (1997), a psychologist, cognitive scientist, and linguist opposes the theory of parallels between the origin of music and language. He states that, "Music appears to be a pure technology, a cocktail of recreational drugs that we ingest through the ear to stimulate a mass of pleasure circuits at once (p. 528)." For him also an "auditory cheesecake"(p. 534) is a metaphor for music. Pinker believes that there are great differences between music and language. To prove his theory, Pinker indicates that children all over the world are able to use their native language with a certain degree of sophistication, carrying on conversations while using idioms and more complex expressions.

In contrast, Pinker assumes that not everybody can make music in the same natural way that people use their native language, although everybody takes pleasure in listening to music. He observes that people need previous training to learn about music and many of them are unable to play an instrument or sing in tune. Furthermore, the author explains that "complexity of spoken vernaculars" (p. 529) presents similarities among cultures and periods. In contrast to that, he continues, music presents dramatic differences cross culturally, and people usually appreciate the rhythms that they grow up with, but they have difficulty understanding foreign melodies.

Pinker also suggests that the similarities that spoken vernaculars have among cultures and periods cannot be compared with the variety of music styles throughout these same cultures and periods. Pinker deduces that different from language, music only

communicates “formless emotion” (p. 529). He considers that music is so different from language that it is impossible to put a simple sequence of events in musical tones, regardless of the music style. Finally, the author concludes that music, far from adaptation, is just evidence of human technology (1997).

Similarly, Johansson (2005) clarifies that singing and rhythmic music does not play an important role in language evolution, even though these elements have been present since the earliest stages of language origin. This research points out that “... music seems to have its own neural circuits, distinct from language...” (p. 215). Additionally, he indicates that people who have few musical skills do not present problems in their oral language, which proves, from his point of view, that music and language do not have parallel roots. However in light of Mithen and Falk’s contention it is a good idea to continue studying the relationship between language and music.

The Effect of Music in People’s Minds and Brains

Next this section reveals the opinions of several researchers about the effect of music on people’s minds and brains. This topic validates the use of music as an additional component of the vocabulary instruction approach by Beck et al. because it describes the way that music facilitates children’s focus for longer periods of time than without music.

A research team from the Stanford University School of Medicine illustrates that music interconnects the areas of the brain responsible for paying attention, making predictions, and updating the events in memory (Srdharan, D., Levitin, D., Chafe, C., Berger, J., & Menon, V., 2007). The research team chose music to study the brain’s attempt to make sense of the different flow of information (“stimulus stream” p. 521) that

the real world generates. The researches called this process “event segmentation” (p. 521) because, according to them, the brain needs to break apart that stimulus stream into meaningful units, taking out information about beginnings, endings, and events in between.

Srdharan et al. (2007) justified the use of music in their study because “[it] is innate to human cultures and ... is considered an ecologically valid auditory stimulus. Like speech, music is hierarchically organized...” (p. 521). In addition, researchers also saw that music had perceptual event boundaries at several specific hierarchical levels and time scales, including discrete tone, rhythmic motifs, phrases, and movements (2007). The results of this investigation comes from a series of experiments that researchers did with 18 participants, 8 women among them, who did not have any previous music training. Researchers obtained quick looks of participants’ brains while 19 to 27 year old participants were passively listening to two sets of four symphonies of baroque music, called for this study “authentic musical stimuli” (p. 522). Each run lasted nine minutes and the symphonies had 20 music transitions. The researchers used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in order to access an image in motion representing isolated brain’s responses that were active before during, and after a particular music activity or no physical stimulus (music) at all.

The study reveals that, “A strikingly right-lateralized network of brain regions showed peak response during the movement transitions when, paradoxically, there was no physical stimulus” (p. 521). The study concentrated on movement transitions. For example, when the music slowed down it marked a brief silence before the next

movement. Anybody that did not have musical training could easily detect this brief silence (transitions span p. 521). Then, the researchers analyzed participants' brain scans during a 10 second window before and after the transition and between movements. They recognized two distinct neural networks engage in processing the movement transition, placed in two separate areas of the brain. The right-lateralized network, as they described above, presented significantly more activity than the left-lateralized network. The use of the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) allowed researchers to see how the brain's responses evolved to different phases of a symphony. The use of different parts of the network in the brain during pauses in particular events in the music demonstrated how the brain predicted changes without knowing the entire piece of music. According to Baker (2007) Jonathan Berger, one of the co-authors of the study concluded that, "Music engages the brain over a period of time and the process of listening to music could be a way that the brain sharpens its ability to anticipate events and sustain attention" (p. 2).

Likewise, other researchers demonstrated that the right frontal cortex of the brain activates when in a piece of music there is suddenly a chord that the brain does not expect to hear (Gazzaniga, 2008). Similarly, the area in the left frontal cortex associated with the language network also activates in the same musical event. For example, an individual who hears a phrase structure that is wrong, such as "eat I breakfast morning this." The left hemisphere of her brain activates the same as when listening to the wrong chord in the music piece. Based on this study, the author suggests that these areas in the left hemisphere seem to be very sensitive to violations in expected structures. (2008).

But listening to music and taking music lessons have different effects on people's minds. Schellenberg (2004) demonstrated that six-year-old children could increase their IQ by taking music lessons. His study included 144 children interested in music and that had access to keyboards at home. In addition, their parents needed to demonstrate full support for this study. Researcher decided to choose that specific age for formal lessons because, according to him, plasticity of the brain weakens in older children. Neither their family social status nor their parents' education was taken into account for participants. To establish comparison the large group was divided randomly into 4 groups. Two groups were assigned to keyboard lessons or Kodály voice lessons. The two control groups took either drama lessons or no lessons at all. High qualified music and drama instructors taught small groups of six students for one year.

The results showed that music lessons caused small increases in IQ, but nonmusical activities did not show any changes in that regard. Although drama lessons did not enhance IQ, they did affect positively social behavior, which was not manifested in the music groups. The researcher admits that the connection between music lessons and IQ could also have been influenced by the well-established fact that small classes and consistent school attendance result in good academic performance. Nevertheless, Schellenberg points out that "music lessons involve a multiplicity of experiences that could generate improvement in a wide range of abilities" (p. 513).

Music Intelligence

The study in this document is directly related to the theory of music intelligence because it proposes a teaching strategy that combines the robust vocabulary instruction

by Beck et al. with a music component. The music element of this study intends to augment the effectiveness of the approach by Beck et al. reaching among others those students with a musical learning style.

Howard Gardner, psychologist and professor of education at Harvard University and proponent of the original Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory, sees music not as a way to enhance IQ, but as one of the eight independent faculties that every single human being possesses in some degree (Garner 1998). In 1983 he proposed the following categories for MI such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic (e.g. sportspeople and dancers), interpersonal (the ability to read other people's moods, motivations and other mental states), intrapersonal (the ability to access one's own feelings and to draw on them to guide behavior), emotional intelligence (focus more on cognition and understanding than on feelings), naturalistic (the ability to classify and recognize natural objects). The author left open the perspective of an additional intelligence for future investigations that he identified as existential (for philosophic and religious thinkers).

Gardner states that music intelligence identifies people with a musical learning style, with the ability to transfer information through sound, song, music, and listening to tunes, rhythms and rhymes. Based on previous researchers around the Mozart Effect, Gardner suspects that both music and spatial intelligences draw on common abilities (1998). Another researcher (e.g., Sternberg, 1995) affirms that humans demonstrate musical intelligence showing three cognitive skills, *perspective, production, and reflection*. Sternberg, psychologist and investigator of human intelligence, explains that

people demonstrate perception by discriminating between musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and the sonic qualities of timbre and texture. The author says that people show production skills when they articulate musical thought in composition and performance. Finally, researchers describe people with reflection skills as those who use their critical thinking to do musical arrangement or musical adaptations to improve a piece of music (1995).

As a pioneer of MI, Gardner (1998) disapproves educational models that use music in a frivolous way, limiting the whole idea of MI to singing the alphabet song or playing Mozart in the background while one is performing an academic task. He hopes that in the future more students will be reached and motivated effectively when their favored ways of learning will be taken into account in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This approach, according to him, will give students a sense of involvement in academic life. Gardner thinks that the idea of MI should be implemented for more effective pedagogy and assessment in schools, classrooms, curricula, texts, and computer systems (1998).

The Application of Vocal Music in the Elementary Language Classroom

This subject is directly connected to my research questions because the study is using vocal music as an additional component to Beck et al.'s instructional approach for kindergarten language learners.

The great pressure that No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has put on elementary education to make their reading strategies more effective, has made public school administrators and teachers more conscious about the theories of literacy instruction (O'Herron & Siebenaler, 2007). In connection to this concern, the National Reading Panel (NRP) Report (2000) identified five key components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness instruction, phonics instruction, fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction, and text comprehension instruction. Several researchers recommend music to strengthen children's reading skills in these five key components.

Music and Phonemic Awareness Instruction

O'Herron et al. (2007) theorize that vocal music is a natural form of developing this skill since through the act of singing children learn to hear and manipulate phonemes, which are the smallest units of language. Research explains that young singers practice phonemic awareness when learning to hold the breath on a vowel or consonant sound, interrupting the air with the same sound in various rhythms, pitches, and dynamic range (2007). Furthermore, Gromko (2005) shows that teaching children to analyze a simple song into its patterns would enhance their ability to segment words into phonemes. This analysis is associated to the hypothesis of near-transfer promoted by E. L. Thorndike in the theory of identical elements. This theory implies that transfer of learning would take place only if two activities contained similar or common elements. In the context of this theory near transfer means that skills and knowledge are applied in the same manner each time the knowledge and skills are used. An example would be in a situation where analyzing a simple song into its patterns would enhance children's ability to segment

words into phonemes. Although Gromko admits that her study needs further investigation related to the near-transfer effects of music instruction, she concludes that through the near-transfer process music instruction leads to significant gains in the development of young children's phonemic awareness, particularly in their phoneme-segmentation fluency, an aural skill (2005). Moreover, Fisher and McDonald (2001) suggest that instructors can address phonemic awareness also on a daily basis introducing rhyming songs to young students and engage them in language game activities to identify the words that rhyme in a particular song.

Music and Phonics Instruction

Moustafa and Maldonado-Colon (1999) explain that story songs with the whole-to-part phonic instruction is an effective way to teach children how to read because this method is based on what the children already know and uses that knowledge to build on more learning. Researchers indicate that young readers need to learn words in context in a whole body of print with the predictable text that children's song lyrics have. Using explicit and systematic instruction, the authors recommend teaching in the familiar text letter-sound correspondence with sounds that children already know. In that way, according to them, children are able to decode and pronounce those words in other stories songs, poems, or storybooks (1999).

Music and Fluency Instruction

For fluency instruction, several researchers (e.g., Rasinski, 2003; Rasinski, Homan, & Biggs, 2009; Sample, 2005; Patel & Laud 2007) agree that using songs provides effective repeated oral reading that foster reading fluency. Rasinski (2003)

defines reading fluency as "... the ability of readers to read quickly, effortlessly, and efficiently with good meaningful expression" (p. 26). In order to achieve this goal, researchers (e.g. Rasinski, et al. 2009) recommend direct instruction in reading fluency by engaging children in reading song lyrics and performing them with the class as a way of celebration and performance. Authors believe that informational text do not provide the authentic voice that songs give to the reading material. They say, "Singing lyrics to songs is a form of reading that is nearly ideal for fluency instruction" (p. 201). In addition, they suggest that the phenomenon of getting a song stuck in someone's head is a natural form of repeated exposure to text that builds reading fluency (2009).

In their study related to effectiveness of using songs and lyrics to increase reading fluency, Patel & Laud (2007) found that using songs and lyrics in fact fostered a higher level of students' engagement and motivation for the reading task. This created an environment of interest that helped to form students' understanding of the true definition of fluency and motivated them to reach their reading goals (2007). Above all, singing parallels speaking in many ways in terms of prosody since prosody refers not only to the intentional grouping of words into phrases, but also the intonation, stress, and rhythm of speaking and reading aloud (O'Herron et al, 2007). Research stresses that rhythm, an important element in music, is also related to language to the point that young readers who lack rhythmic perception also have difficulties with fluent reading (2007).

Music and Vocabulary Instruction

In vocabulary instruction, Fisher and McDonald (2001) suggest that every time a teacher introduces a song to the class is an opportunity for children to acquire new

vocabulary. They recommend teachers encourage children to discuss the meaning of words in songs and create a chart with WH (who, what, when, where, how) questions to help children develop reading comprehension (2001). Newman (2006) indicates that a recent study points out that it is essential for children from age three onward to learn at least 2,500 words per year, and that they should acquire at least two new words per day. Research advises that children need to be active participants in this vocabulary acquisition process (2006). Song, rhymes, and poems, according to her, are joyful sources of vocabulary that can engage children in this process on a daily basis and improve their memory, vocabulary, and creative uses of language (2006). Wolverton (1991) suggests that music should be adapted to language instruction if enhancing vocabulary is the goal of improving children's reading.

Music and Text Comprehension Instruction

Researchers have shown interest in knowing the effect of music on reading comprehension when using literacy and songs in the language classroom, but according to Kouri and Telender (2008) there are few studies that support this particular language strategy. Nevertheless, some researchers have observed uses of songs and literacy that provide anecdotal samples of reading comprehension strategies in early elementary grades. Fisher et al. (2001) comment on a number of lessons they observed when teachers used story songs to help children to understand the sequence of events in a story. In these lessons, children demonstrated their story comprehension using words, pictures, and creative movements to retell the stories (2001). For older students, Kolb (1996) recommends a series of activities such as cloze technique, story maps, and music

response journal that involved reading comprehension using songs' lyrics in the language classroom.

In a another study, Kouri et al. (2008) tested reading comprehension with thirty kindergarten and first grade children with a history of speech and language delay. The purpose of their study was to determine if sung storybook reading would improve story comprehension and narrative re-tellings. In their study, children had to listen to storybooks read in either a sung or spoken voice and then retell stories and answer story comprehension questions. Although, researchers concluded that there were no substantial differences between hearing sung or spoken stories in children's comprehension, they noticed that children's narrative had a richer vocabulary when re-telling sung versus spoken stories. Kouri and Telander assume that this finding corroborates other researchers' outcomes demonstrating the positive results that music has on vocabulary acquisition.

Teaching Vocabulary

This study is closely related to teaching vocabulary because it applies the instructional approach by Beck et al. to teach Spanish vocabulary with a music component. This section takes a closer look at Isabel Beck et al.'s approach to teach vocabulary explained in the book *Bringing words to life: robust vocabulary instruction* by Isabel Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan. Finally, I will refer to a combination of criteria that different authors suggest to select songs in the language classroom and methodologies to use these songs for vocabulary instruction.

Beck et al.'s Approach to Teaching Vocabulary

Based on a number of studies there is a profound difference among students from the same grade level in vocabulary knowledge due to little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in school curricula (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002). This subheading takes a closer look at the approach by Isabel Beck et al. to teach vocabulary to young children in the book *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* by Isabel Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan and two more articles by Beck and McKeown. Beck & McKeown (2007) report that "... schools are not doing much to increase student vocabulary and [that] the mere act of attending school has little effect on vocabulary growth" (p.252). As a solution to this problem, Beck et al. see the need of implementing effective vocabulary instruction that clarifies directly the meaning of words along with critical thinking, lively, and interactive follow-up. In that case, researchers propose what they call, *robust vocabulary instruction* and a variety of examples for teachers to apply in their classrooms (2002).

Misconceptions About Learning Vocabulary

Beck et al. (2002) explain that the traditional ways of teaching vocabulary have been focused on the idea that students learn words better in context. Although this belief might be true, researchers report that in their earliest days children learn vocabulary through oral context. They note that later children's vocabulary is enhanced from written context. But written context, researchers acknowledge, is not as effective in learning vocabulary as oral context. They emphasize that written context lacks the intonation, body language, and the physical environment that oral context has. In addition, authors

argue that young readers need to have the skills not only to read a great amount of text to encounter rich vocabulary, but they also need to have the ability to infer the meaning of words from the context they read.

The authors observe that the misconception related to learning vocabulary from context comes from three assumptions: students learn words in context, they expand their vocabulary adding words to their lexicon, and teaching words in the context is more practical, since there are too many words to teach through direct instruction (2002).

Tier Two Words

In order to clarify these confusions it is necessary first to see what researchers say about words and vocabulary instruction. Beck & McKeown (1985) suggest three groups of words, called *tiers*, to classify vocabulary and give teachers a clearer perspective on the kinds of words that need attention for instruction. Beck et al. (2002) categorize tier one words as everyday vocabulary that almost never need instruction. For example, *table, book, car, sad, cold*, and so on. On the other hand, tier three words are the ones associated with a specific field, and their use is uncommon outside of this domain. Researchers recommend that teachers should reserve those words for appropriate situations or subject matter. Words in this group have important use in science, geography, math, and so on. Some examples of tier three words are, *reptiles, photosynthesis, valley, and volcano*. Tier two words are the ones children need to acquire in order to become mature language users. Since these are the words children are going to encounter in most of the domains, deep knowledge of this vocabulary can have a strong impact on their comprehension and verbal functioning (2002).

Word Knowledge

After analyzing a number of theories about word knowledge, Beck et al. (2002) conclude that, “what it means to know a word is clearly a complicated, multifaceted matter; and one that has serious implications for how words are taught and how word knowledge is measured” (p.11). Beck et al. decide that the instruction the teachers implement determines the kind of learning they wish. Most of the time the teachers’ goal is to provide students with enough word knowledge, to understand a text with those instructed words and remember those words well enough to use them in both oral and writing communication. The authors believe that assessing deep word knowledge goes beyond matching words with pictures or multiple-choice tests. According to them, this is a matter of a more complicated process that requires a functional procedure.

Principles for Selecting Words for Instruction

In order to find the most appropriate vocabulary to teach, Beck et al. (2002) recommend not only to look for the tier two words in the story selected but also words beyond that classification. They point out that it is important to take into account those words that students will be able to explain in their own words. One of the goals in this procedure is to give students more sophisticated vocabulary to manifest ideas that they already express with simpler words. For example, the word *declare* might be a good candidate for instruction since children can relate that word with the word *say*. The idea is not only finding a synonym of the target word but also providing children with vocabulary that allows them to express more specific and complex forms of the words they already know.

Beck et al. (2002) recommend looking also for words that will be useful in helping children understand a particular text that they need to read. They also advise including words that can be used in different ways, so children have the opportunity to build a broader representation of them and associate them with other words. Beck et al. (2002) encourage teachers to use their own judgment about selecting words. For example, they explain that there are words that might be in the tier three classification, but they might be important for children to know in order to understand the text. In that case, researchers recommend providing children with a quick explanation of the words without going into details that are more appropriate during the subject related to those words. In short selections or texts with limited tier two words, authors advise introducing new words that match with the story and help children to make connections with such words. For example if a character in the story eats a lot, the word *glutton* would be appropriate to introduce in the story to describe that individual (2002).

How to Introduce Vocabulary

Beck et al. (2002) criticize the use of dictionaries to introduce words to young children. Observing the space restrictions in dictionaries, researchers conclude that abbreviated definitions in these reference books and the absence of explanation of word meaning prevent young consultants from obtaining a practical concept of a word. Authors propose instead providing children with a student-friendly explanation of target words using everyday language.

One more way to convey word meaning information is to use instructional contexts (Beck et al. 2002). Instructional context, according to researchers, refers to

context obtained from the original selection or so-called natural context. They clarify that teachers need to make available for children both a student-friendly explanation of a target word and an instructional context. Additionally, Beck et al. highlight the importance of modeling for children how to derive meaning from instructional contexts. Introduction of words usually comes before reading a text, but if the meaning of a word jeopardizes comprehension of the story the obvious way to do it is right when the word appears in the text. This can be done by giving a quick explanation of the word or asking students for the meaning of the word. It is important not to let children speculate too much about the meaning of a word to avoid confusion and distraction that moves children's attention away from the story.

What are some Activities for Engaging Students with Word Meanings?

Once teachers provide children with student-friendly explanation or develop word meaning from instructional context, it is necessary to make sure that students deal with the meaning immediately. Beck et al. (2002) offer different type of activities that engage students in this task.

- Word Associations

After explaining the meaning of a small list of words (three or four), teachers ask students to associate one of the new words with a phrase or a word.

- Have You Ever...?

The purpose of this activity is to encourage children to connect the new target word with their own experiences accessing their background knowledge. Students find in this way a link with their own lexicon and the new word.

- Applause, Applause!

Clapping is an indicator of how much the students understand the word in context. In this case teachers say a sentence related to the target word and students respond clapping if they think the statement makes sense or applies to the situation.

- Idea Completions

This exercise consists in giving children sentence stems that need to be completed with one of the target words. The students' task is to find the right word to complete a coherent sentence.

Beck et al. (2002) encourage teachers to follow procedures related to introducing words and engage students in creative activities to implement word meaning. It is important to highlight that Beck et al. exercises are intending to teach English vocabulary. One of the challenges in this study is to adapt their instructional ideas to Spanish vocabulary using words from children's songs.

Developing Vocabulary with Young Learners?

Books for beginning readers have tier one words to which young learners have been exposed through oral language experience with adults or other children. For this reason, Beck et al. agree that these books are not adequate to enhance children's vocabulary. Nevertheless, they emphasize that vocabulary instruction, at that stage, needs to be done at any rate. The authors favor promoting children's vocabulary taking advantage of their listening and speaking skills. For this purpose, researchers recommend trade books that are also known as "read-alouds" (Beck et al., 2007, p.252). Although these books are beyond children's own independent reading level, they are, according to

authors "... excellent resources for vocabulary..." (p.252). Researchers explain that these read-alouds have more difficult structures and more advanced vocabulary than young readers can read on their own. Beck et al. justify this based on the fact that young children 's listening and speaking ability is greater than their reading and writing competence (2007).

Text Talk

Beck et al. (2002) propose consolidating the advantages of reading aloud instructions in a study called *Text Talk* taking into account two goals. The first goal "... is to enhance comprehension through interspersed open questions that asked children to consider the ideas in the story, talk about them, and make connections among them for comprehension as the story moves along. The second goal is to enhance vocabulary development" (p.49).

What is the instructional sequence to enrich the vocabulary of young children?

What is the teacher's role in supporting children's vocabulary growth?

In *Text Talk*, researchers rationalize that after a story has been read, discussed, and brought to a close, direct instruction in vocabulary occurs. Beck et al. (2002) point out that in cases where difficult words appear in the story that might confuse children, it is convenient to support them with a quick explanation in order to assure story comprehension. For maximum vocabulary growth, authors present the following example for the word *reluctant* in five steps to form an instructional sequence. In brackets and next to each step, there is a brief clarification for the teacher's role in each case:

In the story: Lisa was reluctant to leave the Laundromat without Corduroy.

[Contextualize the word as it happens in the story]

Reluctant means you are not sure you want to do something. [Give student-friendly explanation of the word]

Say the word with me. [Ask students to repeat the word to help with phonological representation of the word]

Someone might be reluctant to eat food that he or she never had before or someone might be reluctant to ride a roller-coaster because it looks scary. [Give an example different than the one in the natural context]

Tell about something you would be reluctant to do. Try to use *reluctant* when you tell about it. You could start by saying something like “I would be reluctant to _____.” [Give opportunity to children to provide their own examples using the target word in context and model a grammar structure for them to follow]

“What’s the word we’ve been talking about? [Have children say the target word again to reinforce its phonological representation] (p. 51).

Selecting Songs for Vocabulary Instruction

The final tasks in the next two activities encourage children to deal with the meaning of the target words *impress*, *extraordinary*, and *clutching*. Beck et al. (2002) provides examples for each activity.

Questions, Reasons, and Examples

- If you are walking around a dark room, you need to do it cautiously. Why? What are some other things that need to be done cautiously?

- What is something you could do to *impress* your teacher? Why?
What is something you could do to *impress* your mother?
- Which of these things might be *extraordinary*? Why or why not?
 - A shirt that was comfortable, or a shirt that washed itself?

Making Choices

- If any of the things I say might be examples of people *clutching* something say “Clutching.” If not, don’t say anything (p. 56).

Criteria to Select Songs for Vocabulary Instruction and Methodologies

Finally, there are variety criteria that different authors suggest to select songs in the language classroom and methodologies to use these songs for vocabulary instruction.

What Criteria to Consider?

Researchers (e.g., Osman & Wellman, 1978; Wolverson, 1991; Moomaw, 1997) agree on six criteria to select songs for language instruction.

- Is there any repetition of the melody and lyrics? According to Moomaw (1997) in the same way that young children prefer predictable books they also prefer repetitive songs.
- Is the song easy to learn?
- How long the song is? Take into account children age and lyrics difficulty.
- Is the vocabulary useful?
- Is the song relevant to the curriculum?
- Does the song have standard grammatical structures to model a good language use?

The Best Way to Teach a Song

Many researchers (e.g., Osman & Wellman, 1978; Wolverton, 1991; Moomaw, 1997) have similar points of view on the way to teach songs. Among the issues they agree on are the following:

- Use CDs if there is not an instrument available. A simple tambourine can work.
- Maintain a playful and relaxed atmosphere where children feel free to sing.
- Read the lyrics out loud and ask the children questions about the story line, the vocabulary, etc., to reinforce comprehension.

The next items are suggestions from Osman & Wellman (1978) and Wolverton (1991).

- Sing the song as a whole and encourage children to respond by clapping. This exercise will help them learn the tune of the song.
- Support children producing the new language and encourage them to use their ear to listen for sounds so they become aware of the prosody in the song lyrics.
- Break the song down in order to explain lines or words that may be unclear.
- Divide the whole group in small groups for two-part songs
- Encourage children to represent the song with body movements
- Have children write a new song using the language structure from a song they already learned.

Responding to the need for effective vocabulary, Beck and her co-writers propose vocabulary instruction that aims to produce deep word knowledge in children. Similarly, several researchers propose effective ways to select songs and introduce them to children in a language classroom. These two ideas made me wonder about how to combine them

for unique vocabulary instruction. My experience using songs and guitar to teach in a kindergarten classroom at a Two-Way Spanish Immersion school allowed me to explore in this idea, using Beck et al.'s vocabulary instruction model with a music component.

Two-way immersion education seems to be an effective and powerful vehicle for language instruction that still needs effective methodologies to support full bilingualism. The importance of this educational model focuses on bringing together two groups of students that represent native speakers of both English and Spanish. This methodology promotes full bilingualism for everybody.

Using songs in this type of setting seems to be a strategy that matches well with the theory of different experts on second language acquisition. Confronting behaviorism, Krashen suggests three theories, comprehensible input, the output hypothesis, and the affective filter where songs can play a valuable role. Lyrics of songs are full of input that children can learn to acquire new vocabulary and language structure. The act of singing is a way to produce language without needing corrections, comments, or interactions as Krashen recommends for output. In other words, music might lower students' Affective filter so it is easier for them to learn a second language. In addition researchers have been able to demonstrate in a lab how music interconnects the areas of the brain responsible for paying attention, making predictions, and updating the event in memory. Researchers have been testing the relationship between music and language. As a result, they have shown how the area in the left frontal cortex, associated with the language network, also activates in musical events where there is an unpredictable note. Every subject addressed above is closely related to my research question: How effectively can Beck et al.'s

approach to teaching vocabulary be applied to teaching Spanish vocabulary, when combined with a music component, in my daily context of kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school?

In the next chapter, I will describe a research project involving a program of instruction based on Beck, et al.'s research with a music component. I will present a testing strategy to confirm whether Beck et al.'s vocabulary instruction with a music component works for Two Way Immersion students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The intention of this research is to answer the question: How effectively can Beck et al.'s approach to teaching vocabulary be applied to teaching Spanish vocabulary, when combined with a music component, in my daily context of kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school? In this chapter, I will explain how I implemented the approach by Beck et al. using the music component in the kindergarten dual immersion classroom. First of all, I will describe the rationale for the qualitative research paradigm. I will describe the participants, location setting, the time I spent developing the lessons, as well as the type of assessments I used to evaluate students. I will also explain the criteria

I used to select songs and target vocabulary and how I integrated them into the approach by Beck et al. Finally, I will write the conclusions for this chapter.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

According to Merriam (1998), “Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p.6). The author suggests that one common denominator among these forms of inquiry is that all of them assume that when individuals interact with their social world they construct reality. Similarly, Patton (as cited in Merriam, 1998) explains that in qualitative research the investigator needs to communicate with accuracy and a clear understanding of the nature, uniqueness of situations, and interactions in a particular circumstance. Her idea is that the qualitative study can reflect deeply on participants’ own experience about being in that situation and describe their lives and their personal opinion of their meanings (1998).

In relation to this concept, Merriam highlights the five most common characteristics of all forms of qualitative research. One is the concept of emic as a way to describe the insider’s view and etic to identify the outsider’s perspective. Quinn (2002) suggests that the emic is the individual who is in a specific setting. This person is the subject of the research. The etic is the person who is conducting the research. According to Quinn, the etic shares the experience of the emic or insider well enough to develop the insiders’ view. He explains that “...the participant observer not only sees but also feels what it is like to be a part of the setting or program (p. 268).

Number two clarifies that the primary instrument for data collection and analysis is the researcher. This person is responsible for processing the data and context adapting techniques accordingly. Number three states that qualitative research involves fieldwork. Therefore it requires going where people are. Number four recommends using an inductive research method. This means finding a theory that explains the data collected during research and not the other way around. Finally, number five advises investigators to organize the product of the research in a descriptive manner, since qualitative research concentrates on process, meaning, and understanding (1998).

The umbrella metaphor that Merriam (1998) uses to describe qualitative research above refers to the five major variations in this type of study: basic or generic, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. According to the author, the basic or generic qualitative study in education commonly addresses issues related to concepts, models, and theories in education psychology, and sociology, which is close to the topic of this study. Nevertheless, there is another type of study similar to basic or generic qualitative research that is more focused on teachers and their own educational practice using the techniques of research. According to Ferrance (2000), action research refers to a disciplined inquiry done by teachers hoping to inform and change their instructional practice in the future. In this research, the teachers and their students are in their own school environment dealing with questions associated with educational matters. One of the goals in action research is to improve teachers' skills, techniques, and strategies. It also aims to change instruction for the students' benefit (2000). These characteristics of action research match perfectly with my study. In addition, action

research deals with four fundamental themes that describe the core of my research: empowerment of participants, collaboration through participation, acquisition of knowledge, and social change. Research (e.g. Ferrance 2000) arranges five phases of inquiry:

1. Identification of problem area. This is related to my research question; the description of the problem area can be found on the first three pages of chapter one.
2. Collection and organization of data. This phase will be developed in this chapter using recommendations from Merriam (1998).
3. Interpretation of data. I will cover this phase in Chapter Four using the appropriate procedures to analyze and process data.
4. Action based on data. I will use the information from the data collected and literature in Chapter Two to design a plan or action that will allow me to make and reflect on possible changes.
5. Reflection. I will observe improvements that occur during the process and see if the data clearly show that result. This process will be articulated in Chapter Five.

In this action research I intend to describe faithfully the participants' experience in the school context and their own reflection about it, which will be learning new vocabulary with a specific teaching strategy. In addition, I intend to use an inductive approach to analyze the data and present a clear description of the process, meaning, and understanding of the areas implicated in this study.

Participants

I fulfilled all the requirements that Hamline University stipulates in connection with the human research protocol that included, among others, obtaining permission from principal, school district, and parents. I got back the slip signed by all the parents in the classroom accepting their children's full participation in my research project. Among this group of 20 students, I selected a group of six children that were eager to take part in the assessments and interviews. I collected this data only from six children in one kindergarten class. In the class there were 20 students with 90% Spanish native speakers and the other 10% English native speakers. This was not be the typical TWI educational model that function during the school year, which mixes two groups of English and Spanish native speakers in equal number. During the summer, the kindergarten group has more Spanish native speakers than English speakers, but the language of instruction still is Spanish. Children that came to the summer program needed to qualify for this service and had to be recommended by their classroom teachers. One of the most important criteria from the district that teachers followed, when selecting students for the summer program, was that children needed to be considered academically at risk. Among this student population there were students with different levels of bilingualism in both Spanish and English. My intention was to verify efficacy of this vocabulary strategy collecting data from both groups of students. But unfortunately, from the six children that I chose to assess, only one was an English native speaker. His second language skills were typical for a TWI kindergarten student learning Spanish at this time of the year. Sadly, this student did not come back for the second week of the study. This child was

born in the United States and his ethnic background was Caucasian. Table 3.1 shows participants' information related to their ethnic background and language. The names used in this and other tables are pseudonyms to protect students' privacy.

Table 3.1
Study Participants

Participants Pseudonym	Place of Birth	Native Language	Language Spoken at Home	Years in U.S.
Luis	U.S.	Spanish	Spanish/English	6 years
Carmen	U.S.	Spanish	Spanish	6 years
Ana	U.S.	Spanish	Spanish	6 years
Elizabeth	México	Spanish	Spanish	3 years
Guadalupe	México	Spanish	Spanish	3 years
Ethan	U.S.	English	English	6 years

The native Spanish speakers in this selected group were all of Mexican descent. Two of them were born in Mexico and they have been living in the United States for the last three years. They both speak Spanish at home. The other three students were born in the United States. Two children spoke Spanish at home and the other one spoke both English and Spanish at home, but his dominant language was Spanish.

Research Site

This study was done in a kindergarten classroom in a relatively small suburban area close to a big city in the upper Midwest at a two-way immersion elementary school. This institution started in 2006 with four kindergarten groups with about 22 students in each class. Since then, a new grade level has been added to the school. Last year the school opened 4 first-grade groups with about 20 students in each class. This year three

groups of second-grade students continued the growth of the program with around 25 children in each room. For the 2010-2011 school year the school will have approximately 350 students from kindergarten to third grade. Approximately 55% of the school's student population will receive free or reduced lunch. Also the transient population, or students who stay for one school year or less, will be about 5% of the school's total student population.

Research Setting

The research setting for this study was in one of the three kindergarten classrooms during the academic summer program. There were two teachers and one teacher assistant during the day. The school started at 8:00 a.m., and finished at 2:15 p.m. Students were in the same classroom most of the day, but sometimes during writing the teachers divided the large group in two. Then one of the teachers led one group in another classroom. I conducted my lessons in the reading area using either the white board or the chart board.

Timeline for Lessons

I worked with the group for two weeks from Monday through Thursday. I designed eight lessons from two song stories. Each story had four lessons, so I taught each story in one week. The lesson for this study last about 35 to 40 minutes. I started the first activity at 9:00 a.m., and finished the lesson by 9:40 a.m. I presented the eight lessons to all 20 students in the class and collected data for my research with six students.

Criteria to Select the Songs and Vocabulary

In order to select the songs for this study, I followed the suggestions from three researchers (e.g., Osman & Wellman, 1978; Wolverson ,1991; Moomaw, 1997). I

consolidated their ideas in one whole list of six items (see Chapter Two, p. 46) and started to compare each item with children's songs that I knew from the past. It was important for me to know the songs in advance and to have the experience of teaching them before. Furthermore, the fundamental part of this process was to find songs with appropriate vocabulary to apply the instructional approach by Beck et al. The fourth item in the list of criteria to select a song asks if its vocabulary is useful for language instruction. I added to these criteria the suggestions from Beck et al. about identifying Tier II words in the text. This idea gave me a more clear perspective of what was an appropriate and useful word. For example, the first verse in one of the songs that I selected said:

Spanish Version	English Version
Había una vez una iguana	Once upon the time there was an iguana
Con una ruana de lana	with a poncho made out of wool
Peinándose la melena	combing her mane
Junto al río Magdalena	by the Magdalena River

The first words that I analyzed from this text through the lens of the above criteria were, *iguana*, *ruana*, *lana*, *melena*, and *río Magdalena*. *Iguana*, I observed, was an easy word. Many children knew that word based on my last year's experience teaching the kindergarten curriculum. In addition, this word was not considered a Tier Two word, nor a high-frequency word for mature readers as Beck et al. suggest for this type of vocabulary.

Furthermore, there was no other word that children could use to express the concept represented by this word. In that case children would have to use the word *reptil* (*reptile* in English) to identify *iguana*. I knew for sure that they did not know the word *reptil* and I would have to teach it instead of *iguana* as Beck et al. recommends. These authors say that when there is not enough useful vocabulary in a text, teachers can introduce a new concept that fits in with the story even though it is not in the text. But *reptile* was a Tier Three word still, and that was not the type of word ideal to teach for vocabulary development either.

In conclusion, *iguana* was not a good word for instruction in this case. Similarly, I analyzed the other words in the verse under the same scrutiny and I found similar problems in most of them. But the unfamiliar word *melena* (mane in English) had something else in particular. Although *melena* was a word that children might not find frequently in a text, it was a word that children could explain in their own words as *pelo largo* (*long hair* in English). *Melena* was also a word that children could apply to different contexts, since the word in Spanish can be used for both people and animals. So taking in consideration all these observations I chose *melena* as a target word from that verse of the song. Because of the limited time that I had to teach the target vocabulary and the children's age, I decided to choose only four words per song. From the first song story *La Iguana y el Perezoso* by Marlore Anwandter (2003), I chose the words, *melena* (mane), *lanzó* (launched), *furibunda* (furious), and *encerró* (locked up). From the song *Trencito Cañero* by the same author, I selected the words, *ardor* (arduous), *viajando* (traveling), *ingenio* (sugar factory, ingenuity, wit, and talent), and *detiene* (*hold, stop*).

Initially, I had included the word *manejando* (driving), but in the pre-assessment I noticed that most of the children knew the word already. I decided to replace that word with *viajando*. Although *viajando* was not a completely unfamiliar word to children for instructional attention, it was a word that children needed to comprehend at a deeper level as Beck et al. (2002) suggest. Some of the words that I chose were either adjectives, nouns, or verbs in past tense or in their gerund form. Nevertheless, I did not discuss grammar issues related to verb tense with children. During the student-friendly explanations of vocabulary, I used the verb in different tenses without pointing it out to the children the way the word changed in each case. The main point in this situation was to help children acquire deeper understanding of the word and to use it in different contexts.

Criteria to Teach the Songs

In the same way that I organized a criteria list to select the songs for this study, I also picked eight ideas that the same authors had more or less in common (see Chapter Three, pp. 46-47). Once I had these ideas clear, I used them as a guide in each lesson along with Beck et al's instructional sequence (See Beck et al. 2002, pp. 65-66) trying to overlap or intertwine strategies. I left the instructional sequence by Beck et al in the same original order and used some steps to teach songs to reinforce that sequence. I used some of the criteria to teach songs before or after the vocabulary instruction. The result of this strategy generated the following steps:

1. Read the lyrics out loud and ask the children questions about the story line, the vocabulary, etc., to reinforce comprehension.

2. Use CDs if there is not an instrument available. A simple tambourine can work (.).
3. Maintain a playful and relaxed atmosphere where children feel free to sing.
4. Singing the song as a whole and encouraging children to respond by clapping.
5. Contextualize the word within the story.
6. Break the song down in order to explain lines or words that may be unclear. Have children say the target word.
7. Support children producing the new language and encourage them to use their ear to listen for sounds so they become aware of the prosodic in the song lyrics.
8. Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word.
9. Present examples of the word used in contexts different from the story context.
10. Engage children in activities that get them to interact with the words.
11. Have children say the word.
12. Divide the whole group in small groups to two-part songs.
13. Encourage children to represent the song with body movements.
14. Have children write a new song using the language structure from a song they already learned.

Considering the number of activities suggested above, the time allowed per lesson, and the age of participants, it was impossible to go through each step in one session. Moreover, some of the criteria to teach songs required time for children to get familiar with the lyric and tune.

The preparation for every lesson had to be written in detail. It was important to articulate the instructional process to include every single step in both teaching strategies.

The idea was not only to accomplish Beck et al.'s instructional propose, but also to fulfill the criteria to select and teach songs for language development. Every activity was intentional and was calculated with the idea to help children internalize the vocabulary knowledge. Every activity was on the lesson plan with the intention of providing children with multiple experiences to interact with the target vocabulary.

The Approach by Beck et al. with the Music Component

Next is an example of a typical lesson from the ones I delivered during my study combining Beck et al's approach with the music component. Activities changed every day to apply a variety of Beck et al's ideas (2002). This example was a continuation of lesson one and two. Beck et al. recommend seven steps for the basic instructional sequence. Step one was done more for the purpose of practicing the lyrics of the song and clarifying meanings. This was another opportunity for children to practice their reading by asking them to do choral reading. I started reminding them of the key words they had studied so far. I asked them if they had been able to use the words at home or with a friend.

10 minutes

Step One: Read the story

- Display the words of the song in front of the group.
- Have children do choral reading. Wolverton (1991) suggests to write down the lyrics of the song for students to read.
- Tell children that this story has a beat as their hearts do. Ask them if they can replicate the sound of their hearts using their hands by clapping. Help children to

establish a steady beat clapping and tell them that in that way they are going to clap while they listen to the song.

- Ask students to stand up and do echo singing with the second part of the song to help them with pronunciation of the words, tempo, and rhythm.
- Invite the whole class to sing together.

5 minutes

Step Two: Contextualize the Word within the Story

“En la historia se dice que Doña Iguana encerró al perezoso en el calabozo”.

(the story said that *Doña Iguana* locked up the *perezoso* in the jail cell).

Step Three: Have children Say the Word

“Digamos la palabra juntos ‘encerró’”(Let’s say the word together, “encerró”).

Beck et al. (2002) recommend encouraging students to be part of the deriving-meaning process as soon as possible asking questions every time there is a chance. Authors also advise not to let children get lost and confused in different meanings. Before that, they recommend to intervene providing the student-friendly explanation or bringing their attention to the text on track. (p.41-43) *“¿Qué creen ustedes que le hizo Doña Iguana al perezoso?”* (What do you think Misses Iguana did to the sloth?). Wait to see if children can quickly figure out the meaning of the word *encerró* from the natural context.

Children might say the word *metió*. In this case, tell them that that word is very similar to *encerró*, but it is not quite the same. Once you provide the student-friendly explanation establish the difference between those two words. Be sure to explain to children that the

word *metió* does not have the connotation of “locked something up” that that word *encerró* has.

Step Four: Provide a Student-friendly Explanation of the Word

“Encerró es cuando meten a una persona, animal, o cosa dentro de un lugar en donde no se puede salir o de donde no pueden sacarla/o.” (*Encerró* is when someone put a person, an animal, or an object in a place where it cannot get out or nobody can get it out).

5 minutes

Step Five: Present Examples of the Word Used in

Contexts Different from the Story Context

¿Sabes de algún animal que la gente tiene que encerrar? ¿Por qué lo tienen que encerrar? (Do you know about an animal that people have to lock up? Why do they lock it up?) *¿Te has quedado encerrado/a en algún lugar una vez? ¿En dónde? ¿Por qué te quedaste encerrado?* *¿Conoces a alguien que se haya quedado encerrado? ¿En dónde se quedó encerrado/a?* (Have you ever gotten locked up in a place? Where? Why did you get locked up? Do you know somebody who has gotten locked up? Where did that person get locked up?)

Step Six: Engage Children Activities that

Get Them to Interact with the Words

On the whiteboard, explain to students that you are going to show them two groups of pictures of different objects. In one group they will see pictures of some objects that they will need to pretend to lock up in a certain place. The other group has pictures

of places where they can lock up those objects from the other group. Tell them that their job is to match each object with the appropriate place. Be sure students identify well every picture before they start the exercise. Model for students how to say the sentence while they are matching the objects.

Voy a mostrarles dibujos de dos grupos de objetos. Un grupo tiene dibujos de cosas que ustedes tienen que encerrar en un lugar. El otro grupo tiene dibujos de lugares en donde ustedes pueden encerrar las cosas del otro grupo. Veamos si ustedes saben como se llama cada una de estas cosas... Comiencen su oración diciendo por ejemplo: “El tigre lo encierro en ...”

(I am going to show you two groups of objects. One group has things that you have to lock up in a place. The other group has pictures of places where you can lock up these things from the other group. Lets see if you know the name of these things... Start your sentence saying for example, “I can lock the tiger in ...”).

Group of Objects	Group of Places
Tigre (tiger)	jaula (cage)
Anillo (ring)	cofre (jewel box)
Carro (car)	garage (garage)
chaqueta (jacket)	casillero (locker)

Juguetes (toys)	caja de juguetes (toy box)
Perro (dog)	casa (house)

Step Seven: Have children Say the Word

“¿De qué palabra hemos estado hablando?” (What’s the word we’ve been talking about?).

10 minutes

Using all the Words Together

Beck et al. (2002) suggest concluding the lessons with a short activity in which all the target words that have been chosen during the lesson are brought together. Authors advise to review them with the children before starting using them simultaneously. Most of her samples have only 3 words, but in this unit there are 4 target words. Beck (2002) agrees that several words make it a little bit more difficult to find a relationship among them. The following exercise comes from one of Beck’s examples when it is challenging to put the words in a single context (p. 58).

Tell students that they have been talking about four words during the week. Tell them, *Pensemos acerca de estas palabras un poco más...* (Lets think about these words a little bit more. [p.57]) The words *melena*, *lanzar*, *furibunda*, and *encerró* are used in the questions below. Encourage children to answer the questions...

- ¿Qué animal tiene la melena muy larga y lo llaman el rey de la selva? (What animal has a very long mane and is called the king of the jungle?)

- *¿Serías capaz de lanzar a este animal a un lago? ¿Por qué no?* (Would you be able to throw that animal in a lake? Why not?)
- *¿Qué haría poner furibundo a este animal?* (What would make this animal furious?)
- *¿Cómo se ve ese animal si está furibundo?* (How does that animal look if it is furious?)
- *¿Qué lugar sería bueno para encerrar a este animal si se pone muy peligroso?* (What would be a good place to lock up this animal if it gets too dangerous?)

5 minutes

Closing

Divide the group in three small groups and designate each group one verse of the song. Tell them that each groups is going to be responsible for singing that part of the song when it is their turn. Clarify to children that the other groups will have to wait for their turn to sing their part. Tell children that everybody can join the singing in the chorus.

Total time: 40 minutes.

Assessments

Pre-assessment

From the song stories *La Iguana y el Perezoso* and *Trencito Cañero*, I developed eight lessons to teach eight tier two words in two weeks. Before I introduced a song story to the students, I assessed their target vocabulary knowledge. This pre-assessment measured how much the students knew about those words. This tool also gave some ideas

about possible confusions that students could have related to the meaning of the target vocabulary before it was taught. I created a format for this tool based on a chart provided by Beck et al. (2002) with evidence of the multifaceted characteristic of word knowledge (p. 12). Students did not have any contact with the tool, since I was recording their answers and making notes in the spaces provided in front of each word. During the interview, I formulated a simple question such as *¿Qué quiere decir melena?* (What does *mane* mean?). Based on their answer I made a check mark under the level of knowledge of the child and wrote their answer or additional comments that I thought were important as indication of knowledge or confusion. Based on the chart provided by Beck et al. I divided the chart in four levels indicating the degree of word knowledge as follows:

1. Does not know the word
2. Has seen or heard the word
3. Knows something about it, can relate it to a situation
4. Knows it well, can explain it, use it

Originally this chart was created as a self-evaluation for word knowledge, so in the second item I had to read students' body language and general responses when they heard the word that indicated to me that they had seen or heard it before.

Mid-point Assessment

The mid-point assessment was administrated to students to see how much each one had learned from the exposure to the vocabulary during the first two days of lessons. I called this tool mid-point assessment because it was administrated in the middle of the week where students were learning one song story with a group of four tier two words.

For this test I used the same format that I had for the pre-assessment. Similarly, I asked the same kind of direct question that I used in the pre-assessment without using pictures or props.

Post-assessment

This assessment was considered the last one in every song story that I had already taught. As with the other assessments, students took the post-assessment twice, one for each song story. The format of this tool was the same used in the previous assessments and the question was basically unchanged. It was necessary to apply to this assessment some of the strategies that Beck et al. (2002) recommend, in order to collect enough evidence of students' deep knowledge of the target vocabulary. For example, I provided some inquiry that led children to use their own ideas and make connections with their own experiences. In addition, this strategy allowed them to use the word in a different context than that of the original text.

Every interview was unique and some children were ready for a second, third, and even fourth inquiry that would allow her or him to demonstrate how to explore the word more deeply. For example, during the post-assessment of the song story *La Iguana y el Perezoso*, I asked Carmen, *¿qué es lanzó?* (what is *lanzó*). She replied shyly, *lanzó, lanzó, que la tiró.* (launch, launch, that somebody threw it). Because she repeated the word twice and gave a quick explanation of the word, I knew that she was able to say more about the word. So I asked her, *dime un poco más sobre que es lanzó.* (Tell me more about what is *launched*). She responded excitedly, *lanzó, lanzó que avientas unos juguetes y también un carro para que juegues... un juguete.* (Launched, launched, that

you throw some toys and also a toy car so you can play, a toy). Here Carmen used the word *aventar*, which is another synonym of the word *tirar* that she used in the beginning. It is important to point out that the word *aventar*, in this context, is used commonly in Mexico. That gave the idea that Carmen was able to use a familiar word to explain a more difficult one. Next, I wanted her to explain a little bit more about the meaning of the word, so I asked her, *¿y cómo lo lanzas?* (How do you launch it?). Then she explained, *con las manos y lo tiras.* (with your hands and then you throw it). In this situation Carmen demonstrated that her deep understanding of the word was in level four of the chart. Although, Carmen did not have enough opportunity in this interview to use the word in context, she was able to explain the meaning of the word in her own vocabulary using two different synonyms to represent the target word. Furthermore, in my observations during the lesson, I noticed that Carmen used the word in context when she was talking about throwing a ball.

Comprehension Assessment

Students were evaluated in their general comprehension of each story and the uses of target vocabulary. I administrated this assessment at the end of each week in order to evaluate each song. The results of this test were evaluated based on a rubric to determine the level of comprehension that children had of each song story and the usage of target vocabulary. I divided the rubric in two columns: one column for story comprehension and the other one for the usage of target vocabulary. The rubric had five levels of performance numbered one to five where five was the higher score as followed:

1. Very limited

2. Limited
3. Adequate
4. Strong
5. Outstanding

In the comprehension assessment for the first song, *La iguana y el perezoso* for example, Carmen scored 5 in the interview and 4 in the usage of vocabulary. Following there is a description of her performance and the rationale of her scores. Initially I asked, Carmen, *cuéntame acerca de la historia de La iguana y el perezoso*. (Carmen, tell me about *La iguana y el perezoso* story). Carmen said, *la iguana tomaba café y el perezoso vino caminando con pijama*. Then she stopped talking. I encouraged her to move on asking her, *jajá!, ¿y que más?* (aha! and what else?). She continued, *y el perezoso juntó (sic) la cabeza del (sic) de la iguana y... la iguana... la igua (sic)... el perezoso aventó la iguana en el agua y el perezoso se tomaba el café a la hora del té*. (and the sloth put together the iguana's head in the water and the sloth drank the coffee when it was time to drink tea). To this point of Carmen's intervention, I noticed that there was a misuse of the verb *juntar* (collect, put together), but I could deduce that she meant, probably, that the sloth took the iguana by its head and threw it into the water. The story really says that the sloth threw the iguana head first into the water. It is important to notice also how comfortable Carmen was using familiar expressions changing the tone of her voice depending on what she was referring to. When she used the connector *y* (and) to link two ideas, she prolonged the sound of the word as she probably does when she is talking to one of the members of her family about an everyday situation. Carmen was also using

short phrases from the song to retell the story, which demonstrated how learning the lyrics of the song had incorporated new grammatical structures in her lexicon. Next, Carmen stopped to think. One more time, I motivated her to keep going with her narration asking her, *¿y que más pasaba?* (and what else was happening?). She continued, *y el perezoso vino furibunda* (sic) ... (and the sloth came furious). Carmen stopped to think... then she noticing that she was wrong about who was furious. I asked her, *¿quién vino furibunda?* (who came furious?). Correcting herself, Carmen answered quickly, *el... la iguana*. (the [definite article masculine singular form]... the [definite article feminine singular form] iguana). Then I asked her, *¿por qué?* (why?). Carmen said, *porque el perezoso la empujó al agua a la iguana y la iguana... espichó la oreja del perezoso y la (sic) metió a la jaula*. (because the sloth pushed the iguana into the water and the iguana pinched the sloth's ear and put it inside the cage). In this situation, I wanted to know if Carmen was able to use the target word *locked in*, so I asked her, *¿pero solamente lo metió en la jaula?* (but she only put him inside the cage?). She replied, *no, no, le espichó la oreja, le espichó, le agarró la oreja y le (sic) ventó (sic) le a... ventó... y le agarró el (sic) llave, puso la llave y le dió (sic)... le metió, metió la llave y...* (no, no, she pinched his ear, she pinched, she grabbed his ear and she threw him, and grabbed the key, she put the key and gave him... she put the key inside and...) Then Carmen stopped to think... I asked her, *¿y cómo dices eso, cuando le mete la llave?* She waited couple seconds to think a little bit more and then she responded successfully, *encerrar*. (lock up). According to Beck et al. (2002) it is important to encourage children to use directly the target words in their sentences to see if they really know them.

She continued, *y el... y la iguana... y el perezoso se tomó el café todo y el perezoso le dejó un poquito en el... y la iguana se tomó el último café.* (and the... and the iguana... and the sloth drank all the coffee and the sloth left a little bit in the... and the iguana drank the last sip of coffee). In the last part of her retelling Carmen is making an incredible effort to communicate her thought in a meaningful way. I noticed that Carmen could not remember tier one words such as *puerta* (door) and *taza* (cup) in her last sentences. Similarly, she struggled with some grammar structures such as defined articles although, most of the time she self corrected successfully. According to the rubric, 5 points is the equivalent of an outstanding performance in the comprehension part. To reach this goal Carmen needed to respond precisely giving details in her narration. Additionally, she needed to reflect a thorough understanding of the story. Her elaboration consistently needed to enhance the general response. Analyzing her retelling, I concluded that Carmen had met these criteria in spite of her difficulty to articulate her thoughts. For the vocabulary part, Carmen reached 3 points out of 5. She needed to use 2 target words in order to obtain this score. In her narration Carmen used effectively the target word *furibunda* in her sentence and described the word *encerrar* using her own words and was able to remember the word.

Video Recording Material

The lessons were video taped to facilitate the collection of data related to observations. This material was also useful for me to reflect on the way I deliver the lessons and the sequence development of the instruction using the songs. The videos also

showed the level of students' participation and their response to inquiry and target vocabulary use.

Audio Recording Material

Audiotapes were used as a way to record the children's responses during assessments. The use of this material was less distracting than writing the answers in front of the students. Additionally, audiotapes allowed me to go back to children's responses and examine their answers carefully. The comprehension assessment was recorded also to capture children's uses of vocabulary and their understanding of the general meaning of the story.

Conclusions

The process of adapting the instructional sequence approach by Beck et al. to teach Spanish vocabulary with a music component is a demanding task for both teachers and students. It requires time for preparation and clear understanding of the instructional sequence and criteria to select and teach songs for vocabulary development. It is important for teachers to make the lessons engaging and move quickly through activities to children keep motivated. The music component helped greatly with repetition of target words and comprehension, but teachers need to be careful not to over use it and make the song boring. Additionally, vocabulary lessons and discussions should be organized in a spiral manner so that the students continually build upon what they have already learned. For some students it is difficult to understand fully the meaning of a word in the first lesson. But if they have the chance to see it in a different context in another lesson, they might start to internalize its knowledge. I found students using vocabulary from the first

song story while the class was discussing a different word in the second story. This situation gave us the opportunity to bring back the word and refresh its meaning and enhance the possibilities of its use.

The effect of the action research paradigm in this study allowed me to address the effective vocabulary instruction more from my own reality in the classroom. This type of research made me think about problems with teaching vocabulary strategies in a more proactive manner, where I can be part of the solution. Action research helped me to understand the importance of collecting data, interpreting them, and evaluating results. These were crucial steps to find indications of effectiveness in combining the approach by Beck et al. with a music component to teach Spanish vocabulary in a kindergarten classroom at a Two Way immersion school. To summarize, this type of research made me realize that this study is fully connected with the daily lives of language teachers and that it had practical use in a classroom.

The next chapter will provide the results of the assessments that I administrated to that selected group of children. I will give details about the assessments and explain how the students responded in general.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In this chapter I will present the results of the data collected for this study. This outcome will reveal an answer to the core question: How effectively can Beck et al.'s approach to teaching vocabulary be applied to teaching Spanish vocabulary, when combined with a music component, in my daily context of kindergarten classroom at a two-way immersion school? I will provide details about the results of the assessments and explain how the students performed in general, adding some vignettes and anecdotal notes from the students. I will describe in more detail the way I applied the method combining the approach by Beck et al. with the music component.

Assessment Results

I assessed students using one-on-one interview to guarantee accuracy with the data collection. Every assessment was audio recorded, so I was able to go back to students' responses and verify their knowledge. Since I taught two story songs, each one in one week, I administrated two pre-assessments, two mid-point-assessments, and two post-assessments (see tables 4.1 and 4.2). In addition, at the end of each week I gave the students one final comprehension assessment for each song story that I taught them. I decided that if the students answered correctly 80% of the questions that would be an indication of the effectiveness of the teaching strategy. I videotaped the activities to confirm the flow of the lessons, students' participation, and the correct use of the sequence instruction recommended by Beck et al.

Pre-assessment Scores for La Iguana y el Perezoso

According to the assessment chart, there were four words to be assessed. The students can score 4 points per each word (25%) and 16 points (100%) in the whole assessment. If students scored on certain words above four points on certain words that would indicate to me that those words needed to be changed to more challenging ones. If a few students scored three on each word the words still could be kept for instruction, since the purpose of the study was to provide deep understanding of vocabulary. For example, Guadalupe scored eight (50%) on the whole assessment. For the word *lanzó* she scored three and in the word *encerró* she scored three as well. She scored one point on the rest of the words. I concluded from this result that Guadalupe could benefit from learning those four words. Similarly, Ethan and Carmen scored three in the word *encerró*,

but their scores in the other words were one in each word. As a result, I left the four words without changes as target vocabulary for the four lessons.

Mid-point Assessment for La Iguana y el Perezoso

I observed on this assessment that there was significant growth in terms of vocabulary comprehension. Everybody increased their scores from the previous assessment an average of 39%, with only two days of exposure to the vocabulary. There was a particular case of quick growth with the word *furibunda* that demonstrated the beginning of deep vocabulary understanding. Carmen and Luis scored 4 points out of 4 on that word. During the assessment Carmen explained, “*furibunda es cuando está enojada, ella se pone furibunda porque ella no me deja jugar*”. (Furious is when she gets upset; she becomes furious because she doesn’t let me play). From this utterance I could tell that Carmen was able to use a familiar word to explain the meaning of the target vocabulary. In addition, she was able to use the word in a context different from the song story. Carmen also demonstrated with her answer that she internalized the meaning of the word. In her example, she put herself in the role of a child who was bullied by another one who does not let her play because that person is furious. In spite of Carmen’s ability to interact with that word, I noticed that nobody had yet reached higher than 75% in his or her total score.

Post-assessment for La Iguana y el Perezoso

This assessment showed that students only increased their score an average of 9%. There was a child whose score went down six points, three students did any change from the previous assessment, and only two students had significant increment of 12%

and 13% in their scores. The same students surpassed the 80% goal to demonstrate the effectiveness of the instruction. That means that 33% of the students in the group could demonstrate deep knowledge of most of the vocabulary in this song story. Surprisingly, Carmen was not part of that group.

Tables 4-1 and 4-2 show the result of the assessments explained above.

Table 4.1

Song Story La Iguana y el Perezoso
Students' Performance on Assessments

Students	Pre-assessment	Mid-point	Post- Assessment
Carmen	38%	69%	69%
Luis	25%	69%	63%
Guadalupe	50%	75%	75%
Ana	25%	69%	81%
Elizabeth	25%	75%	88%
Ethan	25%	50%	50%

Table 4.2

Song story La Iguana y el Perezoso

Number of Students Scoring at Points and Approximate Percentage Levels for all Tests

Points	Percentage	Pre-assessment	Mid-point	Post-Assessment
14-16	90-100%			
13-14	80-89%			2
9-12	60-79%		5	3
7-8	40-59%	1	1	1
4-6	20-39%	5		
Percentage of students				
Scoring at 80% or Above		0%	33%	50%

Pre-assessment Scores for Vocabulary for Trencito Cañero

In this pre-assessment I used the same format as the previous assessments.

Initially, I used five words to see how much children knew about them. In this case five students scored three out of four in the word *manejando* (driving), one student scored also three in the word *viajando* (traveling), and three students scored three in the word *detiene* (stop, hold). Before I administrated this assessment, I suspected that children were going to know something about the word *manejando* through their own experience seeing their parents or relatives driving a car. For that reason I decided to add one extra word in the assessment and withdraw the one children already knew. Since five children scored three in the word *manejando*, that was an indication that most of them had certain familiarity with its meaning. So that word was not part of the target vocabulary list. Most

of the students scored 1 in the rest of the words and two students scored two in the word *viajando*. That indicated to me that it was appropriate to keep the four words left in the list for instruction. In Table 4-2, I included only the scores from the words I finally selected.

Mid-point Assessment Scores for Vocabulary for Trencito Cañero

The results of this assessment show the scores of 5 students due to the fact that Ethan did not come back for the second week. I noticed in this assessment that the vocabulary increased an average of 13% from the previous assessment. In addition, none of the students reached higher than 63% in their total score.

Post-assessment Scores for Vocabulary for Trencito Cañero

This assessment showed that students increased their score an average of 20% from the previous one. Everybody in the assessment presented growth at a certain level. There was a student who increased her percentage up to 31% above from her previous assessment, but still her score did not reach the 80% expected at this point. Elizabeth and Guadalupe had an important increment of 18% and 19% in their scores from the mid-point assessment. The same students surpassed the 80% goal. As an example of their progress during the post-assessment, Elizabeth explained the word *viajando* in this way:

Viajando es cuando vas a ir a algún lado y quieres visitar a unas [sic] a tus abuelitas. Un día fui viajando a donde mi tío Oliverio, bien lejos de Minnesota. Vive en México. Fui en carro. Me traje mi bata, zapatos, traje también mis calzetitas, traje mis calzones. (Traveling is when you go to some place and you want to visit your grandmas. One day I went traveling where my Uncle Oliverio,

far away from Minnesota. He lives in Mexico. I went by car. I brought along my dressing gown, my shoes. I brought also my socks and my pants).

Based on Elizabeth's reaction to the word *viajando*, I could tell that she built the meaning of the word with elements that we discussed in class around this word. In the song *Trencito Cañero*, there was a little mouse traveling in the back of a tractor cart. On the poster with the lyrics that we read in class, there was a picture of the mouse carrying its bag. The class talked about carrying your luggage when you travel and students help to described what they packed in it. In the same discussion, children talked about places where they can travel and they also listed different ways of transportation.

The post-assessment demonstrated that 40% of the students in the group could prove deep knowledge of most of the vocabulary in this song story. Tables 4-3 and 4-4 show the results of the assessments described above for this story song.

Table 4.3 *Song Story Trencito Cañero*
Students' Performance on Assessments

Students	Pre-assessment	Mid-point	Post- Assessment
Carmen	25%	38%	50%
Luis	44%	50%	69%
Guadalupe	44%	63%	81%
Ana	25%	38%	69%
Elizabeth	50%	62%	81%
Ethan	25%	—	—

Table 4.4

Song Story Trencito Cañero

Number of Students Scoring at Points and Approximate Percentage Levels for all Tests

Points	Percentage	Pre-assessment	Mid-point	Post- Assessment
14-16	90-100%			
13-14	80-89%			2
9-12	60-79%		2	3
7-8	40-59%	3	3	
4-6	20-39%	3		
Percentage of students				
Scoring at 80% or Above		0%	0%	40%

Final Assessment for Comprehension

I administered this assessment to the students selected after they attended the four lessons for each song story. This assessment was a one-on-one interview with the purpose of giving each student the opportunity to re-tell the story they had learned using the target vocabulary. The tool (see Appendix) that I used to collect the data for this assessment was an oral comprehension rubric with five levels of potential achievement for each criterion. The scores that I gave to each level of achievement was 1 to 5, where 5 represented the highest score. I produced the summary score for the oral comprehension, adding the scores for each criterion. One criterion was *comprehension* and the other one was *use of target vocabulary*. Maximum points accumulated from both criteria were 10, which represented 100% of correct responses. Tables 4-5 and 4-6 show students individual performance in each song story. Additionally Table 4-7 consolidates the information from both oral comprehension assessments.

Oral Comprehension Scores for La Iguana y el Perezoso

Students demonstrated in general strong comprehension of the story although it was difficult for some of them to use the target vocabulary. Eighty percent of the students scored 80% for comprehension assessment. Two students obtained 80% of the total score in their rubric, which represent 40% of the group. During the assessment it was necessary to provide children with different questions to help them bring the target vocabulary to their narration. I started the interview asking children to tell me the story about *La Iguana y El Perezoso*. Guadalupe replied curiously to my question, *¿ya se le olvidó la historia?* (did you forget the story already?) From this inquiry children started their retelling most of the time not in the right order. To motivate them to continue their narration, I usually asked them, *¿y qué más pasaba?* (and what else was happening?). I felt also it was important to give them some signals of approval to keep them engaged in their retelling. Usually, I redirected them to certain parts of the story to help them with the sequence of events. I applied the recommendations by Beck et al. (2002) for encouraging children to interact with words, in order to motivate the use of target vocabulary. I usually asked them, when it was appropriate, questions such as, *¿Qué estaba haciendo la iguana?* (what was the iguana doing?) *¿Qué se peinaba la iguana.*(what was the iguana combing?) Using the scaffolding method, I intended to help children make connections and bring the target words to their own version of the story. Only 40% of the students obtained 80% of the total score for this assessment. Table 4.5 reflects the scores and the details explained above.

Table 4.5 Song story *La Iguana y el Perezoso*

Students' Performance on Oral Comprehension Assessments

Students	Comprehension	Used of target vocabulary	Total score
Carmen	50%	30%	80%
Luis	40%	20%	60%
Guadalupe	30%	20%	50%
Ana	40%	20%	60%
Elizabeth	50%	30%	80%
Percentage of students			
Scoring at 80% or Above	80%	0%	40%

Oral Comprehension Scores for Trencito Cañero

The comprehension part of this assessment showed that 60% of the students scored the 80% desired score to demonstrate effectiveness of the teaching method. On the other hand, the part related to the use of target vocabulary fluctuated between adequate and limited according to the rubric. None of the students reached the expected 80% of the score in this criterion. Similar to the inquiry strategy used for the previous assessment, I also maintained students' focus on their narration. I questioned them about the specific event that they pointed out so they would have the opportunity to reach for the target word. During the interview, I noticed that most of the children forgot the target vocabulary and could not remember them even with prompts. In order to remember the story and the words, Luis opted for using chunks of the lyrics of the song that he managed to memorize to retell the story. When he began narrating the story, he said, *hay un conejo muy peludo y en el último carrito va paseando un ratón*. (There is a very fluffy

rabbit and in the last cart a mouse is traveling). Although, Luis successfully started the story from the beginning using his strategy, he skipped a detail in that specific event. As a result, his narration was missing a piece of information in the middle and he did not notice it. The rabbit, in the original story, is in fact driving a tractor. In the same utterance, Luis talked about what the mouse was doing in the last cart of the train, but curiously he did not use the target word *viajando*. He used the synonym *pasear* instead.

Students such as Luis demonstrated clearly that they knew what happened in some parts of the story using synonyms of the target words, but not the words themselves. While hearing children retelling the story, I asked them questions that made me realize that they had missed an important event. When Luis was talking about the moment when the rabbit arrived at the sugar factory and got out of the tractor, he said, [the rabbit] ... *está viendo arriba y no sé lo que está viendo...* (it is looking up there, but I don't know what it is looking at). In that part of the story the rabbit realized that the mouse had eaten the sugar cane. Luis recognized that he did not know that part, so he was missing something in the story that would help him to comprehend the story better. Furthermore, I also noticed that some children started confusing target vocabulary. For example when I asked Ana, what was the name of the house where the train arrived? I was expecting she would answer, *ingenio* (sugar factory). Instead, she puzzled and then said, *detiene* (hold, stop). In this situation, the word *detiene* did not have any relationship with *ingenio*; she knew that the word *detiene* was one of the target words that I was looking for in her answer.

Table 4.6 reflects the scores and the details explained above. Table 4.7 consolidated the information from both oral comprehension assessments.

Table 4.6

Song Story Trencito Cañero

Students' Performance on Oral Comprehension Assessments

Students	Comprehension	Used of target vocabulary	Total score
Carmen	40%	20%	60%
Luis	30%	20%	50%
Guadalupe	30%	10%	50%
Ana	40%	20%	60%
Elizabeth	40%	10%	50%
Percentage of students			
Scoring at 80% or Above	60%	0%	0%

Factors Affecting Scores

Vocabulary Difficulty

Table 4.7 permits the comparison of scores between the two song stories and shows that the song story *La Iguana y el Perezoso* was much easier to comprehend for most of the children than the second song story. Factors such as difficult vocabulary might influence the general comprehension of the song and the scores, especially in the rubric. The words *ardor*, *ingenio* and *detiene* presented different complexity in their meaning for the children. The word *ardor* is rarely used in conversation and represents an abstract condition. Children might need more practice using the word in different contexts as Beck et al. (2002) recommend. By the same token, the word *ingenio* could have been difficult for children because of its multiple meanings. I gave children a student-friendly definition for one of the meanings, which was *ingenuity*, and they had the opportunity to interact with the word in different contexts. I provided them also with the second definition that was necessary for the song story comprehension. Children needed to know that *ingenio* was also a sugar factory, but this might have confused them with the first definition. Although, the word *detiene* was not totally unknown for 50% of the children in the pre-assessment, they had a hard time using it in context. Students most of the time chose the synonym in the form of *se para* to express the same idea. *Parar* is a frequent action word in their daily conversations.

Table 4.7

Scores from Both Song Stories Students' Performance on Oral Comprehension Assessments

Students	La Iguana y el Perezoso	<i>Trencito Cañero</i>
Carmen	80%	60%
Luis	60%	50%
Guadalupe	50%	50%
Ana	60%	60%
Elizabeth	80%	50%
Percentage of students		
Scoring at 80% or Above	40%	0%

Limited Instructional Time

Children only had 40 to 45 minutes every day for four days every week to get familiar with both the target vocabulary and the song stories. During the summer academic program there are no classes on Fridays. This factor prevented me from using all words together in an additional activity as Beck et al. (2002) recommend. According to researchers, at the end of the lessons it is important to engage children in a series of activities where they can interact with all the target words simultaneously.

Missing Class

The robust academic instruction proposed by Beck et al. (2002) demanded focus, persistency, and continuity in the lessons. Attendance was crucial for children's success in this endeavor. Luis was a clear example of the negative impact that missing school

could have in children's academic performance. He missed one day of class and the day after he came back, he needed to take the post assessment. As a result, he was the only case in the whole study that showed regression in one of the scores results. From 69% that he obtained in the mid-point assessment for *La Iguana y el Perezoso*, he scored 63% in the post-assessment.

Assessing During Recess Time

Because of the lack of time during the academic day, it was necessary for me to assess children as soon as I finished teaching the lessons, when they did not have academic work to do. Classroom teachers scheduled recess time right after my lessons, so I needed to walk with the class to the playground. In that setting, I had to interview the children and record their answers. Most of the time children wanted to go and play with their peers instead of sitting with me answering questions. This factor was also a distraction for them not only by the fact of being outdoors, but also by looking at their friends screaming, running, and having fun.

Scaffolding During Assessment

Listening to the tapes with the different assessments recorded, I realized that I did not provide the same scaffolding to every child. Individual assessments were very unique, and situations where key questions arose were unpredictable. It was difficult for me to keep track of ways of scaffolding that were effective for some children to produce appropriate responses.

Dealing with Many Words at the Same Time

I noticed that toward the end of the second week children started getting confused about the correct use of words. For example, I was doing an activity called word association recommended by Beck et al. (2002) when I asked the class, which word goes with working hard? In this case, *ardor* (ardour, fervour, zeal, elan) was the expected answer. But Ana responded eagerly, *furibunda!* (furious).

Discipline Issues

During instruction it was necessary for me to call attention to some children who were distracted 15 or 20 minutes after the class started. Some of these children were very young kindergarten students and they were still working on sitting still and paying attention. Their behavior prevented a smooth flow of the lessons.

Limited Time with the Class

Everyday I spent only 40 or 45 minutes with the class for instructional time. Every other day I spent an extra few minutes with each individual student during assessments. As a result, I was not present in the class the rest of the day as their classroom teachers were. For this reason I could not reinforce the use of the target words or help them to remember the song stories.

Conclusions

Results from the assessments present an optimistic perspective of what the overlapping instruction of Beck et al.'s approach with a music component can do in a Spanish kindergarten classroom (2002). Probably due to the limited time I was able to spend on the lesson, the expectations for the outcome of the assessments were not

reached. Nevertheless, the tables demonstrated that students in general presented vocabulary growth in a short amount of time.

Factors that jeopardize the overall performance of the students were evident. Based on the summary of issues that affected scores, one can conclude that conditions in the summer academic program limited the study on robust vocabulary instruction. The disadvantage of not having the appropriate time of instruction in the week interrupted somehow the sequence of the lesson plans. In addition, the lack of time did not allow the development of the lessons in a more relaxed atmosphere.

In Chapter Five I will discuss the process to adapt Spanish songs to the vocabulary approach by Beck et al. I will analyze the results and the implication of this study for vocabulary instruction and role that music plays in this learning process. I will also comment on limitation of the study and implications for further research as well as the impact of bilingualism in the 21st Century.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

When I started thinking about ideas for my research study, I thought about doing it on vocabulary instruction because vocabulary is an area that I want to improve in my teaching. I wondered how I would assess my students in my research study, showing them pictures and hoping they would match the word with the right image. I used to believe in the idea that children would learn most of their new words just by reading. Natural context was for me the source of new words that children had to puzzle out to find the correct meaning. Knowing the endless number of words that students had to learn, I was absolutely convinced of the use of dictionaries as the most practical tool for older readers in the process of enhancing vocabulary. I used to believe that young readers had to wait until they could read more difficult books in order to learn unfamiliar words.

When I learned about Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, and Linda Kucan (2002) and what they call the robust approach to vocabulary instruction, my old beliefs around this topic started to fade away. Their ideas were beyond manipulating pictures and dictionaries. Based on their approach, natural context had to be adapted to make it easier for young readers to understand target words in the text. In this way, developing an instructional context facilitated an environment where children would have helpful clues to find out the meaning of new vocabulary. Beck et al. also taught me that it was necessary for teachers to create a student-friendly explanation of target words. The dry and quick meaning that dictionaries provided was not always an effective method to get a clear definition. I saw that Beck et al. (2002) advocated for an intentional way of teaching vocabulary where educators needed to provide direct instruction and productive, but fun activities to children. I observed that authors supported the use of well-thought questions to make children think and use words to enhance their language comprehension and production.

Using Spanish Songs with Beck et al.'s Approach

Once I had a better idea about the approach by Beck et al., I realized that I needed to also find a serious approach to teach music in a language classroom. Suggestions from several authors (e.g., Osman & Wellman, 1978; Wolverton, 1991; Moomaw, 1997) helped me consolidate a list of reliable criteria to select and teach songs for enhancing Spanish language. Then I thought of the children's songs that I used to listen to back in my country, Colombia, and the lyrics of *La Iguana y el Perezoso* and *Trencito Cañero* by

Marlor Unwandter (2003) started clicking in my brain. Both songs fulfilled the criteria on the list.

The next step was to figure out the target vocabulary to teach. The recommendation provided by Beck et al. for choosing words to teach was crucial in this process. In this procedure I also understood better the concept of Tier Two Words and the suitable amount of words for instruction depending on children's age. From the long list of 10 words per each song that I was planning to introduce to children, I was surprised to see that the logical and achievable amount was reduced to only four target words. Looking at the basic instructional sequence suggested by Beck et al. and the criteria that I chose to teach songs, I found that there are some similarities between these two proposals. Then I decided to overlap strategies from both groups, maintaining a logical order of instruction.

There were a series of steps from the approach by Beck et al. that required me to keep them together without using music. Those blocks of instruction where children were sitting for longer periods of time were compensated for later by the music component that encouraged them to be more physically active. Music in this case became an extension of the activities suggested by Beck et al. enhancing the possibilities of language exposure in a fun but still a learning environment.

Results

Mid-term assessments revealed that in both song stories students made progress with only two days of exposure to the instructional method suggested by Beck et al. and the music component. Growth was also evident between mid-term and post-assessment in

both song stories. The growth from the mid-term assessment to the post-assessment for the second song story was higher than it was in the first song story. Total scores were higher in the first song than in the second one. Previous to the study, I had set a goal of 80% of accuracy in the assessments to demonstrate effectiveness of the instructional method. As a result 33% of the students in the first song story and 40% in the second one reached that goal. Oral comprehension assessments showed that 40% of the students in the first song story reached the goal. In contrast, none of the children in the same assessment for the second song story attained the desired score. I concluded from these numbers that the lack of time of instruction prevented students from having full understanding and ability to use the vocabulary.

In Chapter Four, I mentioned the lack of appropriate space to assess the students and I listed a number of factors that made this process difficult. I am wondering if a combination of environmental factors negatively affected students' performance. I am also curious about the level of vocabulary knowledge and story comprehension of those students who I did not assess. A number of them were active participants during discussions and they demonstrated good skills to interact with words. In addition, they expressed great interest in singing and learning the lyrics.

Implication for Vocabulary Instruction

The use of the approach by Beck et al. with a music component in the kindergarten classroom is consistent with the theories of Krashen's comprehensible input (+1), the Output Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter. The sequence of activities for teaching words to young children suggested by Beck et al. support the theory of

comprehensible input (+1) where children need to be exposed to language that they have not acquired yet but they are ready to learn. Singing the songs and getting engaged in interacting with words provide opportunities for children to produce language. Singing and speaking are the bases for the Output Hypothesis. Furthermore, children singing spontaneously waiting in line to go to recess presents evidence of a lower filter to produce the language without restrictions.

Several researchers (e.g. Wolverton, 1991; Moomaw 1997; Fisher et al., 2001; Newman, 2006) have supported the use of music in language instruction. Their suggestions and criteria to select songs to teach vocabulary were adapted in this teaching strategy. Without their contribution, it would have been difficult to figure out the commonalities between selecting and teaching children's songs for language instruction and the sequence of instruction for vocabulary suggested by Beck et al.

The fact that this overlapped strategy is based on both the robust vocabulary instruction proposed by Beck et al., and the extensive study to improve vocabulary teaching methods using music suggested by another group of researchers gives reliable elements to this study. Teachers who are seriously interested in implementing a new method to enhance vocabulary in children can find in this study a challenging approach that combines direct instruction and student centered activities. Nevertheless, implementing this method requires conscious preparation of the lessons and the choice of the right songs and vocabulary.

I used my guitar during the singing part of the instruction and it helped me to accommodate the music according to the children's needs and progress. Although

children show some preference for live music, teachers can also use a CD player to teach a song. But in this case teachers' voice is a very important way to motivate children to sing. Even if teachers do not consider themselves good singers, they need to remember that children enjoy singing with them anyway. Teachers with no background knowledge of music can make good use of a tambourine or a drum for accompaniment (Wolverton, 1991). Moomaw (1997) suggests the use of an autoharp for non-musical teachers since they do not need any music training in order to play it. In addition to their love for music, teachers model also their willingness to take risk and try new methods for their students. Beck et al.'s approach with the music component provides students with deep vocabulary knowledge that allows them to remember words and use them in appropriate contexts.

Role that Music Plays in this Learning Process

Using music in the classroom makes me think about how much children enjoy listening to it. Music makes them pay attention, and I can redirect that attention to target vocabulary and oral comprehension. Listening to children singing while they were lining up to recess after my lessons, made me realize that those songs were helping them to memorize the lyrics and at the same time comprehend the story. Additionally, music clearly helped Spanish learners in the group to lower their affective filter and take more risks using their second language. Observing children singing so spontaneously demonstrated their intrinsic motivation to use language and enhance their vocabulary. I believe that the combination of music and song played an important role not only in

supporting the instructional sequence approach to enhance vocabulary, but also cultivating their intrinsic motivation.

Limitation of the Study

The strategy needs the use of more songs that have tier two words in their lyrics and interesting stories that engage children in meaningful discussions. The method needs to adapt more activities suggested by Beck et al. and guarantee that every step in the instructional sequence is executed during teaching. This strategy could also be used with older grades.

When I replicate this study, I will do it in my own classroom during the school year. This would give me more opportunities to bring the target vocabulary to a more variety of subjects and situations. I can see how target vocabulary can be re-used during science, math, art, or social studies. Taking advantage of other academic settings would give children different possibilities to interact with target words in a natural environment and consequently retain their meanings. In more casual situations, for example transitions between classes while children are lining up, I would use the time to encourage children to sing parts of the song and involve them in informal conversations around the song stories.

I would make the instructional time at least for 50 minutes long each day, so I would have enough time to include the activity recommended by Beck et al. where students can use the target words together. This additional ten minutes would be also appropriate to encourage children to act out the story in order to help them to improve their comprehension not only for those kinesthetic learners, but also for the whole group.

I would try to be more consistent with the kind of questions I ask children during the oral assessments. This would give equal opportunities to all participants to produce enough utterances that could reflect more clearly their degree of comprehension.

Implications for Further Research

This study is just the beginning of a strategy that is intended to combine a powerful instructional method to teach vocabulary and the power of music itself. There is so much that other researchers could do based on this beginning. Because of the time frame to finish this research study, I included only some of the activities and strategies suggested by Beck et al. (2002) whose ideas were plentiful. I felt inspired by those the authors suggested to create my own activities and try them with the class. Similarly in this study, I used only two songs, but the repertoire of Latin American children's music is endless. There are a number of artists dedicated to promoting children's songs in different Spanish speaking countries. For example, a Mexican artist such as José Luis Orozco has recorded several CDs with many traditional tunes representing many Latin American countries that could serve well for this vocabulary strategy.

Teachers who feel inclined to adapt this method to another language could easily do it. Spanish in this study was an example of what teachers could do with other languages. Furthermore, teachers could work on adapting this instructional method for older students as well using appropriate music for their age. In chapter Five of the book *Bringing words to life: robust vocabulary instruction* used for this study, Beck et al. explain how to use their vocabulary approach with upper elementary grades, middle, and high school. Based on my own experience using music in both Spanish classes and

immersion settings at a high school level, I can testify about the success of songs with older students. The importance of music for teenagers, in their daily lives, is common knowledge. Implementing this method for older students could help them to reflect on the music they listen to everyday and encourage provocative discussions about values and vocabulary used in those songs. With this method, older students might expand not only their vocabulary but also their musical knowledge of different genres. Additionally, teachers can promote students' appreciation for meaningful lyrics and appropriate uses of standard vocabulary.

Impact of Bilingualism in the 21st Century

This method could be useful in other schools because the acquisition of a second language is crucial in the 21st century. Development of technology has dramatically impacted communications around the world. Socio-economical and political phenomenon as globalization has forced people to immigrate and be part of a world society that needs effective communication skills. In the United States, the official language, English, is “competing” with newer immigrant languages that are here to stay and eventually, whether we want it or not, change the culture of the country's society. Thousands of children who come from these non-English speaking families are part of the public school system in different states. These children need to maintain their native languages and learn English to become bilingual citizens. In addition, they need to perform at grade level with their native English-speaking peers. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, a growing number of these minority students have limited or no English language proficiency and often have had limited formal education in their native

countries (CAL, 2010). Consequently, education has to be updated everyday with efficient language methods of teaching that promote bilingualism not only for English learners but also for English native speakers as well. The approach by Beck et al. adapted to teach Spanish vocabulary to children and combined with a music component could become a new alternative to supply this need for effective methods of language development.

APPENDIX A

Pre-assessment Lesson One
from the Bringing Words to Life by I. Beck,
M. MacKeown, and L. Kucan

Unit Theme: Beck's Approach Tier II Vocabulary with a Music Component

Pre-assessment Lesson One to Four

"La Iguana y el Perezoso"

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Question: *¿Qué quiere decir...?* (What does _____ mean?)

This pre-assessment is based on Beck's chart (2002), which was originally created to provide evidence of some degree of deep word knowledge and shows the complexity of measuring it (p. 10). The chart was adapted for this specific unit to record answers from younger Students about each key word. A check mark will be used in the space provided to show the degree of knowledge that the student has. An anecdotal record might be done in the same space, if it is relevant to justify the check mark.

Word	4	3	2	1
	Know it well, can explain it in different contexts besides the song, and can use it	Know something about it, can relate it to a situation	Have seen or heard the word	Do not know the word / No response
melena				
lanzó				
furibunda				
encerró				

APPENDIX B

Final Assessment for Comprehension

Unit Theme: Beck’s Approach Tier II Vocabulary with a Music Component

Final Assessment for Comprehension and Usage of Target Vocabulary

“La Iguana y el Perezoso”

Student’s name: _____ Date: _____

Oral Comprehension Rubric

	Comprehension	Usage of target vocabulary
Performance Level	The level of understanding demonstrated by retelling the story in a logical sequence adding details to the main events and naming characters.	Student demonstrates deep knowledge of the target vocabulary using the words in the appropriate situations of the story.

5 - Outstanding	Response is precise and detailed and reflects a thorough understanding of text. Elaboration consistently enhances response.	Student uses all 4 target words when retelling the story and uses synonyms of the words to demonstrate deep knowledge
4 - Strong	Response is accurate and reasonable and reflects a strong understanding of text. Elaboration usually enhances response	Student uses 4 or 3 target words when retelling the story.
3 - Adequate	Response is plausible and reflects a literal understanding of text. Elaboration sometimes enhances response.	Student uses 3 or 2 target words when retelling the story.
2 - Limited	Response reflects a limited understanding of text. Elaboration may exist, but is rarely appropriate.	Student uses 2 or 1 target word when retelling the story. Student uses synonyms of the target word to retell the story
1 - Very Limited	Response is incomplete, incoherent, or off topic. Elaboration may exist, but is not appropriate.	Student did not use any target word or synonym.
Score for each item		
Total score		

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